

REPORTS



CABINET REPORT

Coastal Virginia District – Rev. Beth Givens, Superintendent

The Coastal Virginia District in this conference year has worked to deepen connectional ties by dividing into 8 regional community cohorts and recruiting associate lay leaders for each of those cohorts. We have eight churches in a discernment group learning about Simplified Accountable Structure. We have been thrilled to hold our first in person training events since the pandemic, with over 150 people attending training weekend, and another 75 a few weeks later for an event resourced by the Edges faith community. We continue to support and empower the ministry of local churches on both sides of the Chesapeake Bay.

Living Waters District – Rev. Jay Carey, Superintendent

The LW District welcomed Rev. Thomas Wynn as District Youth Coordinator and held 2 District Youth Retreats! 2024 Regional Charge Conference offerings for District Youth Ministry totaled \$10,000! 200+ persons attended seven different leadership classes led by Conference/District leadership at 2025 EMPOWER District Training at Crenshaw UMC in January. 200+ Flood Buckets were collected for the hurricane Helene Response. A Cameron Foundation Grant was awarded to the Ettrick Project. Southside Gleaning Ministry supported record numbers of families with harvests of produce, fruit and firewood. In just 3 years, District Developer, Rev. Tim Beck has worked with 60+ churches.

Mission Rivers District – Rev. Dr. Charles Ledlum-Bates, Superintendent

The Mission Rivers District aims to foster shared ministry between laity and clergy beyond local churches, promoting collaboration and connection for community transformation. The Board of Directors is improving communication and supports multi-congregation efforts. The District Training Director provides lay training. A successful training day was held in January. A new District Youth Coordinator position was established to connect with youths throughout the district. The Missions Committee approved nearly \$67,000 in grants for community support, and the Trustees Committee recommended almost \$100,000 for facility repairs. The Heartwood Seed Project is starting a community garden. Overall, the district's finances are stable, with high apportionment receipts.

Mountain View – Rev. Dr. Sarah Calvert, Superintendent

In 2024–25, the Mountain View District lived into this year's theme—Go! Make Disciples! Transform the World!—by deepening connections between clergy, churches, and communities across our district. Guided by our vision to Lead in Love, we embraced tools like the 3 Practices process, in-depth outreach using MissionInsite data, and StrengthFinder-based clergy training to foster understanding, resilience, and growth in polarizing times. By God's grace, our clergy community groups were energized and equipped to faithfully engage their diverse contexts with clarity and compassion, and our new structure now includes three co-lay leaders to help strengthen connections across the district. We are also doing some amazing work with missional grants to foster relationships with communities in need.

Northern Virginia District – Rev. Kirk Nave, District Superintendent

The Northern Virginia District partners with, equips, and resources the local church to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. We celebrate the 25 participants and trainers who spent the year participating in Go! a new lay-equipping and empowering initiative. We opened our annual District Training Day to the entire Annual Conference and focused on making disciples with keynotes from Bishops Sue Hauptert-Johnson and Ken Carter as well as Rev. Michael Beck. Our clergy heard from Bishop Tom Berlin for stewardship training and from a panel of pastors reaching their communities in new and innovative ways. The District awarded \$2 million in infrastructure grants to churches, supporting their efforts to care for their spaces while also moving forward with fruitful ministry in their communities. Through strategic training and financial support, we continue to equip leaders, strengthen churches, and make disciples.

Shenandoah River District – Rev. Dr. Victor Gómez, Superintendent

The Shenandoah River District is always striving in making disciples of Jesus Christ. We partner with Just Neighbors, which provides high-quality immigration legal services to low-income immigrants, asylees and refugees in Harrisonburg

and Winchester. We have been working with churches to discern a simplified accountable structure. In addition, Mission Central and Equipment for Caring combines the resources of the churches of the District to serve the families of the Shenandoah Valley. In two locations, Mission Central offers clothing for children and the lending of medical equipment. Throughout the year, the District hosts sessions for leaders to learn more about the different committees and leadership positions. We are blessed to have great staff, lay leadership and clergy. Let us continue to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

Three Notch'D District – Rev. Dr. Hyo Lee, Superintendent

In 2024-25, the Three Notch'D District focused on disciple-making by launching a new congregation at New Song's second campus, supporting 13 cluster groups in mutual learning and collaboration, and fostering revitalization through initiatives such as SAS, Shift, NLI, the Global Leadership Summit, Mission Insite, and clergy coaching. Additionally, we helped 40 churches create updated and inviting websites to enhance their outreach.

In the coming year, we will continue supporting local churches and clergy in bearing kingdom fruit by offering prayers and practical resources for church renewal.

Valley Ridge District – Rev. Douglas Forrester, Superintendent

We have continued our work creating strategic community partnerships to help the most vulnerable amongst us with our Embrace Centers for Community in Waynesboro and Covington. In both areas, we have been working to obtain training for our leadership in community health work and asset-based community development so that we can be effective catalysts for positive change by investing in the communities we serve. Through the excellent work of our staff and lay servant ministries team, the Valley Ridge District now has 120 lay servants/lay speakers working alongside our clergy and lay supply. In March, district leadership partnered with Main Street UMC in Waynesboro to develop and host our Faith in Troubled Times symposium with Amanda Held Opelt as our keynote speaker and local clergy and laity as our workshop leaders. In April, we hosted our Faithfully Embracing Symposium at Calvary UMC in Stuarts Draft with Alexandra Jackman as our keynote speaker at an event that was co-designed and co-led by persons from the autistic community. It is our belief on the Valley Ridge District that ministry to historically marginalized people compels us into the world, and that our compassion will be our visible witness to Christ in the world.

–Victor Gomez, Dean

EQUITABLE COMPENSATION COMMISSION

In 2024, the Equitable Compensation Commission continued 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 \$128,956 was provided to 22 charges in 2024.

There were 14 charges receiving salary support in 2023 that did not require salary support in 2024. These charges are New Beginnings (CV), The Garden (CV), Wesley Chapel (CV), Pender (NV), Christ Community Fellowship-Fairview (MV), Jackson Street (MV), Wesley Chapel-Rock Springs (MV), St Marks (NV), Warren Charge (SR), Enon (TN), Walmsley Boulevard (TN), Bath Charge (VR), John Mann-Wesley Cooperative Parish (VR) and Saint Paul Roanoke (VR).

Beginning on January 1, 2025, the Equitable Compensation Commission in partnership with the Cabinet and Church Development Team (CDT) determined that salary funding and other support related to strategic appointments would come from a CDT grant and be overseen by the Cabinet.

The Equitable Compensation Commission continues to focus on two primary areas:

1. Recommending the Minimum Compensation Schedule for full-time clergy each year
2. Providing salary support for full-time clergy who are experiencing a compensation arrearage, not related to church closures

2026 Minimum Compensation Schedule Recommendation	2026 Proposed	2025 Approved
a. Full Connection Pastors (FE/FD)	\$48,800	\$47,400
b. Associate Members	\$46,000	\$42,700
c. Provisional Members (PE/PD)	\$44,000	\$42,700
d. Local Pastors (completed Course of Study)	\$42,400	\$40,200
e. Local Pastors	\$41,400	\$40,200

–Rev. Tom Durrance, Chair

JUST COMPENSATION TASK FORCE REPORT FOR ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2025

Last year, the VAUMC Annual Conference voted for the Just Compensation Task Force to continue its work, focusing on “studying salary statistics, including documented inequities regarding clergy status, district, gender, race, ethnicity, and years of service.” Rev. Mike Nelson made a motion to also include parsonage standards. The motion was seconded and added to the task force’s work.

This year, we enlisted the help of Dr. Kwang Yoon, a statistician, to review the Virginia Conference United Methodists’ 2024 salary data starting on July 1, 2024, for full-time clergy statistics relating to:

- 1) Gender
- 2) Race/Ethnicity
- 3) District
- 4) Status (FL, PE, PD, AM, FE, FD)
- 5) Years of Service

We did not include deacons in this study, which we assumed would have skewed the results.

Dr. Yoon studied these statistics using multiple regression analysis. This statistical evaluation tool measures how “two or more external variables affect the value of the dependent variable” (Multiple Regression Analysis: Definition, Formula and Uses from <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/multiple-regression-analysis-definition>). Through studying these statistics, Dr. Yoon identified 16 variables that influence clergy compensation, in addition to commonly considered factors such as gender, race/ethnicity, clergy status, and years of service. The analysis also ranks the relative significance of these variables and presents key findings.

The most important findings made by Dr. Yoon included the following:

- 1) **Gender Gap:** On average, female pastors received \$1,774 less annually than their male peers.
- 2) **Race/Ethnicity Gap:** Too few Hispanic and multi-racial pastors were represented in the VAUMC dataset, so a new categorical variable was created by combining these two minority groups for data analysis purposes, resulting in four race/ethnicity groups.
African American pastors received, on average, \$797 more than their white peers, while Hispanic and multi-racial pastors received \$4,637 less than their white counterparts.
- 3) **Years of Service:** Accounting for other factors, on average, pastors were paid \$217 more for each year of service.
- 4) **By District:** Among the eight districts of VAUMC appointments, the Northern Virginia (NoVA) district outpaced all other districts in its salaries. The unadjusted mean salary difference between NoVa and other districts was \$18,727. However, considering all variables, the adjusted mean difference shrank to \$4,193.
- 5) **Limited Itinerary:** Those pastors who chose the limited itinerary option were paid \$1,088 less than their counterparts.
- 6) **Average Worship Attendance:** The results of multiple regression analysis show that average worship attendance strongly affects pastor salaries; that is, for each worship attendee, the salary increases by \$28. For example, if the average worship attendance increases from 100 to 200 members, the pastor’s salary would increase by \$2,800.

To review a more in-depth breakdown of this information and see supporting material, go to: <https://vaumc.org/jctfreport2024/>

After reviewing the VAUMC 2024 statistics, our committee found that:

- a) According to statistics provided by Wespeth in 2025, the Virginia Conference has the second-lowest compensation for clergy in the Southeastern Jurisdiction (SEJ), following the Central Appalachian Missionary Conference.
- b) We found that age is not a good predictor of clergy salary, but the length of service is.

Implications:

This study used regression modeling and statistical analysis to examine clergy compensation. Its findings offer valu-

able insights into how various factors collectively impact pay across churches. While it reveals certain disparities, the complexity and number of influencing variables highlight the importance of ongoing monitoring. A multi-year comparative analysis will be necessary to understand trends and to assess whether these gaps reflect deeper concerns related to equity or fairness in clergy compensation. At this stage, it is too early to draw definitive conclusions.

Celebrations:

- 1) Based on the task force's findings, the Equitable Compensation Commission will add new categories to their recommendation for minimum salaries, including the differentiation of Licensed Local Pastors based on their education and the new category of associate members placed above provisional members due to their lifetime status.
- 2) Following discussions in the Just Compensation Task Force spearheaded by the Parsonage Sub-Committee, the Cabinet is updating its policy on "Minimum Standards for a Parsonage." Updates in this policy include required measures to be taken to be proactive about safety and health hazards, technology needs, heating and air conditioning, and maintenance. See the updated policy here: <https://vaumc.org/cabinetpolicies/>

Read the report on the Parsonage Sub-Committee in the Book of Reports for more information.

See the list of what has been added and changed here: <https://vaumc.org/jctfreport2024/>

- 3) The task force celebrates the statistical services of Dr. Kwang Yoon, a lay member of Korean United Methodist Church of Greater Washington (within the Virginia Conference UMC). He graciously donated his time and expertise for this important work.

Recommendations:

- 1) We recommend retaining Dr. Kwang Yoon's statistical services for the next four years so that the Annual Conference can do a comparative statistical analysis annually. We estimate this service would cost up to \$5,000.
- 2) We recommend dissolving the Just Compensation Task Force and entrusting this work to the Director of Belonging and Advocacy of the Virginia Conference UMC, who will work alongside the Virginia Conference's boards and agencies as related to this work. These groups would continue to study the statistics of the Virginia Conference clergy annually, focusing on clergy status, district, gender, race, ethnicity, disability, and years of service. We ask that they present any recommendations to the 2026 Annual Conference.
- 3) We recommend that the Director of Belonging and Advocacy (as a member of the Cabinet), in consultation with the Order of Deacons, study and establish a just salary policy for deacons serving full-time within the local church. This statistical study would include years of service, housing allowance, and salaries based on deacons' education and clergy status.
- 4) We recommend that the Committee on Finance and Administration, in consultation with the Office of Pensions and Benefits, study the possibility of creating a system in which the Virginia Conference UMC would administer payroll processing and tax-related reporting for all clergy appointed to local churches within the VAUMC. We ask that they present any recommendations to the 2026 Annual Conference.
- 5) We recommend that the Equitable Compensation Commission research models of minimum base compensation based on status, education, years of service, and economic variables, including cost of living (i.e., the Western North Carolina Conference UMC; you can find a copy here: <https://vaumc.org/jctfreport2024/>). We ask that they present any recommendations to the 2026 Annual Conference.
- 6) We recommend that the Cabinet use findings from this report to inform their conversations about setting clergy salaries with Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Committees.

The Just Compensation Task Force: Rev. Timothy Barth, Rev. Eduardo Carrillo, Rev. Jessie Colwell, Rev. Bill Davidson, Rev. Jenny Day, Mr. David Domnisse, Rev. Tom Durrance, Rev. Brad Duty, Rev. Tammy Estep, Rev. J. Douglas Forrester, Mr. John Fuller, Rev. Christy Haga Turner, Rev. Hungsu Lim, Mr. Chris Malak, Ms. Cindy Martin, Rev. Mike Nelson, Rev. Laura Stratton, Rev. Dr. Steve Summers, Rev. George Warner

PARSONAGE SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE JUST COMPENSATION TASK FORCE

The 2024 Annual Conference approved an amendment to the Just Compensation Task Force “to study and consider adding to the Minimum Standards for Parsonages and Annual Parsonage Review regular standardized professional inspection of health hazards, including but not limited to mold, mildew, lead paint, asbestos, and radon.” In response, the Just Compensation Task Force created the Parsonage Subcommittee consisting of Rev. Ryan Ware (clergy), Marilyn Lipieko (lay), and Rev. Dr. Michael Lee Nelson (clergy/chair).

The subcommittee thoroughly reviewed existing VAUMC Parsonage and Housing policies, relevant guidelines from other annual conferences within the Southeast and South Central Jurisdictions, and The Clergy Housing Handbook: Parsonages, published by the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women. We aimed to ensure a clear understanding of current VAUMC standards and identify opportunities to enhance health and safety protections for parsonage families.

Following discussion and input from the Just Compensation Task Force, the Cabinet received the recommendations and implemented many in the new Minimum Parsonage Standards. These updates promote the safety and well-being of parsonage families and affirm the shared responsibilities of local churches/charges and clergy families.

In summary, the changes to the Minimum Parsonage Standards are:

Added “Section I. G. Health and Safety” (This whole section is new for 2025)

- o The church/charge is responsible for regular inspections of the parsonage for health and environmental hazards such as radon, mold, asbestos, lead paint, water cleanliness, carbon monoxide, mercury, electrical hazards, etc.
- o The church/charge is responsible for remedying all health and safety hazards at the parsonage. If a church is unwilling to meet inspection standards, they must rent out parsonage and pay a housing allowance.
- o For second-story bedrooms, the church must provide a fire escape ladder.

II. B. Rooms

- o Changed from 1.5 baths to 2 baths.

II. C. Housing Necessities

- o Added “Adequate outdoor lighting”
- o Added “A garbage disposal and dishwasher must be provided, except for in situations where a dishwasher would be incompatible with, for example, a septic system.”
- o Added “Hard surface flooring preferable to carpet.”
- o “Added Maintenance service contracts for all major appliances are recommended.”
- o Added “Wherever reasonably available, the church must allow internet access at the parsonage. In situations where the only office for the pastor is in the parsonage, the church must supply internet access to the house.”
- o Added “If the parsonage is in an area with poor cell coverage, the church shall provide a landline telephone.”

II. D. Furnishings and Maintenance

- o Removed wall-to-wall carpet requirement.

II. E. Exterior

- o Added “Cutting of the lawn and trimming of the shrubs is the responsibility of the parsonage residents, except for situations where there is not a resident in the parsonage who is physically able to cut the lawn/trim. In these cases, it shall be the responsibility of the church to make provisions for these services.”

We are deeply grateful to the Virginia Annual Conference, the Just Compensation Task Force, and the Cabinet for supporting this work to better protect the health and safety of parsonage families.

–Dr. Michael Lee Nelson

VIRGINIA UNITED METHODIST PENSIONS, INC.

Section I: Reports

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

Virginia United Methodist Pensions, Inc. (“VUMPI”) is the Virginia Conference’s agency that is charged with administering Conference-sponsored clergy benefit programs and denominational pension and welfare plans.

VUMPI, in conjunction with Wespath (formerly the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits), develops and administers the employee pension and benefit plans sponsored by the Virginia Conference. Some plans are employer-paid, while others are voluntary and 100 percent participant-paid:

VUMPI Plans	Wespath Plans
Medical	Ministers Reserve Pension Fund (Pre-82)
Prescription	Ministerial Pension Plan (MPP)
Dental	Clergy Retirement Security Program – Defined Benefit (CRSP-DB)
Vision	Clergy Retirement Security Program – Defined Contribution (CRSP-DC)
Supplemental Life	Compass (effective January 1, 2026)
Voluntary Life	United Methodist Personal Investment Plan (UMPIP)
Healthcare Flexible Spending Account	Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP)
Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account	

Report 2: CLERGY BENEFITS TASK FORCE

In early 2024 a new task force was formed and led by personnel from VUMPI, the Virginia Conference Center for Clergy Excellence and the Virginia Conference Treasurer’s Office. The Task Force was established to review various aspects of the Virginia Conference’s clergy benefit programs, and to evaluate potential program changes that would lead to greater effectiveness, administrative improvements and cost optimization.

The task force was co-led by John Fuller, VUMPI’s Executive Director, Rev. Jessie Colwell, Director in the Center for Clergy Excellence, and David Dommissie, the Virginia Conference’s CFO and Treasurer. Additional task force membership included leadership representing various entities across the Virginia Conference:

Rev. Matt Benson	Ken Peterson
Rev. Jay Carey	Rev. Steve Summers
Rev. Tammy Estep	Bill Talley, IV
Rev. Nancy Johnson	Rev. Ed Walker
Rev. Mark Ogren	Rev. Andrew Ware
Rev. Jonathan Page	Rev. George Warner

Upon conclusion of the task force’s work, several recommendations were released. One recommendation involved the replacement of the Active Clergy Health Apportionment with a new direct bill structure in which churches and Conference-controlled extension ministries will be billed a flat amount each month for each health plan-eligible clergyperson. Following deliberation by the Virginia Conference’s Council on Finance and Administration, the recommendation was adopted, and the new direct bill arrangement for the Conference-sponsored health plan will be implemented in January 2026. For 2026, the monthly direct bill amount will be \$1,660.

The task force presented several additional recommendations for consideration by the VUMPI Board of Directors. Following review, the following task force recommendations were adopted for recommendation by VUMPI, and are being presented at the 2025 Annual Conference for the Conference’s consideration:

- Adopt the Via Benefits retiree medical insurance program, which has partnered with Wespath, beginning in 2026. This recommendation includes the grandfathering of eligibility for the current Conference-sponsored retiree medical program for all clergy who retired prior to 2026. This recommendation is being presented as VUMPI's Recommendation 1.
- Eliminate eligibility for the Conference-sponsored retiree medical and supplemental life insurance programs for retired clergy who withdraw from The United Methodist Church (UMC) after the end of 2025. This recommendation was based on a review of several administrative considerations associated with those benefit plans, and is not a retroactive recommendation. If approved, this would only apply to retired clergy who withdraw from The UMC in 2026 or thereafter. This recommendation is being presented as VUMPI's Recommendation 2.
- Close the PPO 500 health plan to new membership beginning in 2026. The PPO 500 health plan is only made available to clergy receiving Comprehensive Protection Plan disability and surviving spouses and children of clergy. The PPO 500 health plan was originally established as a slightly more generous plan design. However, the task force learned that members newly enrolled in the PPO 500 health plan are often financially disadvantaged by the existence of separate medical and prescription drug deductibles within the plan. In addition, the administrative process of transferring payments toward the plan deductible from a different plan mid-year often results in administrative confusion and adverse member impact. Accordingly, the task force recommended that eligibility for those currently enrolled in the PPO 500 health plan be grandfathered, with ongoing participant contributions subject to Annual Conference approval, but that the PPO 500 plan be closed to new membership in 2026. Any clergy receiving CPP disability benefits, along with any newly eligible surviving spouses and children of clergy, remain eligible to enroll in the Conference-sponsored health plans for active clergy at active clergy participation contributions beginning in 2026. This recommendation is being presented as VUMPI's Recommendation 3.

Finally, a question was received during VUMPI's report at the 2024 Annual Conference regarding the potential to extend eligibility for the Conference-sponsored health plan to clergy serving in 75% appointments. That question was referred back to the Clergy Benefits Task Force for consideration and response. Following deliberation, the task force elected not to recommend the expansion of eligibility guidelines for the Conference-sponsored health plan to include clergy serving in 75% appointments. That recommendation is based on several factors, including the cost associated with such an eligibility expansion and dynamics around the appointment-making process. Accordingly, eligibility for the Conference-sponsored health plans will continue to be limited to clergy serving full time appointment, include those serving multiple appointments that aggregate to 100%.

n Report 3: VIRGINIA CONFERENCE-SPONSORED HEALTH PLANS

VUMPI administers health plans for full time clergy of the Virginia Conference, as well as retired clergy who meet eligibility requirements based on years of ministry in the Virginia Conference. Details of the Conference-sponsored health plans follow:

Active Clergy Health Plans

Health plans recommended to be made available in 2026 are unchanged from the plans offered in 2025. Health plans available to clergy serving in full time appointments in the Virginia Conference include the following:

- **PPO Core:** \$1,000 individual deductible, \$2,500 family deductible, 20% coinsurance
- **PPO Buy-Up:** \$750 individual deductible, \$1,875 family deductible, and 20% coinsurance
- **HSA plan:** a plan with a higher deductible (\$2,250 individual, \$4,500 family) as required by Internal Revenue Service rules for HSAs, a Conference contribution to the Health Savings Account (\$750 for individual tier enrollees, \$1,500 for all other tier enrollees), 20% coinsurance

A fourth PPO health plan with a \$500 deductible, the PPO 500 plan, is made available only to clergy on medical leave with CPP disability benefits and surviving spouses and children of clergy. That plan will continue to be maintained in 2026, with no plan design changes, for members enrolled in the plan as of the end of 2025. As noted in Report 2 above,

and detailed in VUMPI's Recommendation 3, VUMPI recommends that the PPO 500 plan be closed to new membership beginning in 2026, with those who would have been eligible for the PPO plan prior to 2026 remaining eligible for the Conference-sponsored health plans for active clergy at active clergy participant contribution rates.

The two dental plan options currently administered by VUMPI will also continue to be offered in 2026 with no plan design changes.

The vision plan will continue to be offered in 2026, with no changes in the plan design.

Retired Clergy Health Plans

VUMPI administers health plans for eligible retired clergy of the Virginia Conference. The eligibility requirements are based on years of full time ministry in either Virginia Conference church appointments or Extension Ministry appointments with enrollment in the Conference-sponsored health plans.

Plans made available to eligible retirees are coordinated with Medicare eligibility, with separate programs made available to retirees who are not yet eligible for Medicare and for those who are Medicare eligible.

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 the self funded PPO Core or PPO Buy-Up plans administered by VUMPI. Pre-Medicare-eligible retirees may also enroll in the self funded dental insurance program and the fully insured vision program made available to active clergy. The majority of the cost of the health plans made available to Virginia Conference clergy is funded through a Conference apportionment, which is detailed in the Council on Finance and Administration's report, with the remainder of the cost of the plans funded by participant contributions that are based on retiree health plan years of ministry credit, as described in Recommendation 4.

Medicare-eligible retirees who retire prior to 2026 and who are eligible to enroll in the Conference-sponsored retired clergy health plan 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 noted above, with the remainder of the cost funded by participant contributions as described in Recommendation 4.

The second option currently 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 option. The RRA funding for retirees who elect coverage through the Connector option, which is based on the retiree's health plan years of ministry credit, is detailed in Recommendation 4. The remainder of the cost of the elected health plan coverage, if any, is paid by the retiree directly to United Healthcare.

All retirees who retire from the Virginia Conference prior to 2026 will remain eligible for the retiree health program for Medicare-eligible retirees as described above. A new retiree medical program is being recommended for implementation for clergy who retire after 2025. The recommended program, Via Benefits, has partnered with Wespath to make the program available to Annual Conferences who elect to adopt it for their Medicare-eligible clergy. As indicated in Report 2 above, the Clergy Benefits Task Force reviewed the Via Benefits program in detail, and recommended that the VUMPI Board of Directors consider its adoption. Following review, VUMPI is recommending the Via Benefits program for adoption in the Virginia Conference, with eligibility extended to all current and future retirees based on years of full time ministry in the Virginia Conference. In order to reduce the member disruption that would result from requiring all currently retired clergy and spouses to transition from the current Conference-sponsored retiree health plan to Via Benefits, VUMPI is recommending that eligibility for the current plan be grandfathered for all clergy who retired prior to 2026. While not required, those clergy will be eligible to elect new coverage through the Via Benefits program beginning in 2026.

The Via Benefits program, which has been adopted by 28 other Annual Conferences, makes available Medicare supplemental coverage from a range of insurance carriers nationwide. The program includes Medicare Supplement, Medicare Advantage, Part D prescription drug, dental, vision and hearing plans. The choice of plans made available in the Via Benefits program was a significant factor supporting its recommendation, as the absence of dental coverage options in the current Conference-sponsored health plan for Medicare-eligible clergy has been identified as an area of weakness. The

Via Benefits plan is also more insulated from spikes in program costs, as there is a much more expansive range of plan options made available each year. The recommended Virginia Conference subsidy provided to eligible retirees who elect coverage through the Via Benefits program is detailed in Recommendation 4. The recommended subsidy amounts are intended to reflect the average Virginia Conference subsidy that has been provided through the current Conference-sponsored retiree medical program for Medicare-eligible retirees.

Report 4: Pension Plan Structure

The denominational pension and retirement savings program in The United Methodist Church includes several distinct plans, as follows:

- The “Pre-82” Plan for benefits accrued prior to 1982
- The Ministerial Pension Plan (MPP) for service accrued from 1982 through 2006
- The Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP) for service accrued from 2007 through 2025

Pursuant to the approval of the General Conference held in 2024, a new denominational retirement savings program is being launched by Wespeth in January 2026. The new plan, called Compass, is a new defined contribution retirement plan for eligible UMC clergy.

In developing the Compass retirement savings plan, Wespeth prioritized the ability of clergy to accumulate adequate retirement assets, along with long term sustainability and affordability of the plan for churches and annual conferences. As is the case with the current CRSP plan, clergy serving active ministry appointments of at least 50% will be eligible for participation in the Compass plan.

The structure of the Compass plan includes the following components:

- Automatic 3% contribution of clergy total plan compensation, which includes base salary, housing allowance, and a 35% parsonage factor for clergy living in parsonages
- \$150 flat monthly contribution, which is prorated by appointment percentage
- Matching contribution of up to 4% of total plan compensation, with the opportunity to receive the matching contribution based on qualifying student debt repayments

The Compass plan also includes automatic features, with automatic enrollment and automatic contribution escalation each year. VUMPI is recommending specific automatic enrollment and automatic escalation features as detailed in Recommendation 7.

Report 5: Welfare Plans Structure

The welfare plans made available to Virginia Conference clergy include the Comprehensive Protection Plan (“CPP”) sponsored by Wespeth, 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 Denominational Average Compensation “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
- Spouse of active participant: \$16,000
- Surviving spouse of active participant: \$12,000
- Child of active participant: \$8,500

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

- Participant: \$24,000
- Spouse of retired participant: \$16,000
- Surviving spouse of retired participant: \$12,000
- Child of retired participant: \$8,500

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 was phased in with one-year increments, as detailed in the table below:

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

VUMPI administers a supplemental life insurance benefit for active and retired clergy that is paid in addition to the CPP life insurance benefit. The Conference Supplemental Death Benefit for active clergy under episcopal appointment, who are enrolled in CPP, is \$25,000. The Conference Supplemental Death Benefit for retired clergy, who are eligible for a CPP death benefit and who continue to be members of The United Methodist Church, is \$5,000. The beneficiary will receive the Conference Supplemental Death Benefit payable in one lump sum.

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.

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 Wespath, the DAC is projected to increase from 2025 to 2026 as follows:

Denominational Average Compensation	
2025	2026
\$80,003	\$81,603

Section II: Recommendations for Annual Conference Approval

Recommendation 1: Adopt the Via Benefits program for Medicare-eligible retired clergy

As detailed in Report 2 above, VUMPI is recommending the adoption of the Via Benefits program, which has partnered with Wespath, for the Virginia Conference's Medicare eligible retirees in 2026. The Via Benefits program is designed to help eligible retirees and spouses select and pay for Medicare supplemental coverage, with the option also to elect coverage such as dental, vision and hearing coverage. Via Benefits licensed benefit advisors guide eligible retirees through the process of evaluating and selecting coverage options, and also provide ongoing support after enrollment.

VUMPI is recommending that coverage through Via Benefits be made available to all Virginia Conference Medicare-eligible retired clergy, including those who are current in the retired status. However, VUMPI is recommending that all clergy who retired prior to 2026 have grandfathered eligibility for the current Conference-sponsored retiree health plan through United Healthcare. While the expectation is that all current retirees would be able to elect comparable coverage through the Via Benefits program, VUMPI is recommending the grandfathering of current retirees in order to minimize the disruption that may occur if all current retirees and spouses were to be required to select a new health plan.

The Conference subsidy toward the cost of coverage through the Via Benefits program will be made available through Health Reimbursement Accounts (HRAs). Consistent with the current Conference-sponsored retiree medical program for Medicare-eligible retirees, the Conference subsidy amounts will be based on the retiree's health plan years of ministry credit. VUMPI's specific recommendation for HRA funding for retired clergy who elect coverage in 2026 through the Via Benefits program is detailed in Recommendation 4.

Recommendation 2: Retired Clergy Benefit Program Eligibility for Clergy Who Withdraw From The United Methodist Church

As indicated in Report 2 above, the Clergy Benefits Task Force recommended the termination of eligibility for the Conference-sponsored retiree health plan and the Conference supplemental life insurance plan for retired clergy, including Retired Local Pastors, retired ordained clergy and retired associate members, who withdraw from The United Methodist Church in 2026 or thereafter. Following review and discernment, VUMPI is now making that recommendation for Annual Conference approval. This recommendation is based on administrative considerations which were determined to have the potential to create unknown liabilities for VUMPI and the Virginia Conference, and is not intended to be punitive. This recommendation is also not retroactive, and would have no adverse impact on benefit program liability for retired clergy who withdraw from The UMC prior to 2026.

Recommendation 3: Close the PPO 500 Health Plan to New Enrollment in 2026

Following a review of the considerations identified in Report 2 above, VUMPI is recommending that the PPO 500 health plan, which is currently only made available to clergy receiving CPP disability benefits and surviving spouses of clergy, be closed to new enrollment beginning in 2026. This recommendation is made with the recognition that the PPO 500 health plan, which was intended to offer a slightly more generous plan design, actually results in adverse financial impact for some newly enrolled members. VUMPI's recommendation is to close the plan to new enrollment while grandfathering current PPO 500 health plan membership. Beginning in 2026, newly eligible clergy receiving CPP disability benefits and surviving spouses and children of clergy will remain eligible for the health plans made available to active clergy at active clergy participant contribution rates.

Recommendation 4: 2026 Health Plan Participant Contribution Recommendations

In administering the Conference-sponsored self-insured health plans, an element of VUMPI's strategy is to maintain plans that are similar to national average employer-sponsored health plans. In addition, VUMPI recommends participant contributions that are similar, as a percentage of the total health plan cost, to national employer-sponsored plan averages. For 2026, VUMPI is recommending an increase of approximately 5% across each of the Conference-sponsored medical and dental plans for active clergy. No changes are recommended in the Conference-sponsored vision insurance plan.

REPORT: VIRGINIA UNITED METHODIST PENSIONS, INC.

Following are the 2026 participant contribution recommendations for the Conference-sponsored health plans:

Active Clergy:

	Medical Plans			Dental Plans		Vision
	PPO Core	PPO Buy-Up	HSA	Core	Major	
Employee Only	\$115	\$150	\$90	\$15	\$35	\$8.34
Employee + Spouse	\$345	\$410	\$290	\$40	\$100	\$15.05
Employee + Child(ren)	\$350	\$415	\$295	\$45	\$105	\$15.05
Family	\$365	\$450	\$310	\$55	\$115	\$24.19

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		Vision
	PPO Core	PPO Buy-Up	Core	Major	
Employee Only	\$700	\$815	\$30	\$65	\$8.34
Employee + Spouse	\$1,560	\$1,745	\$55	\$130	\$15.05
Employee + Child(ren)	\$1,695	\$1,890	\$60	\$135	\$15.05
Family	\$2,175	\$2,425	\$70	\$140	\$24.19

PPO 500 Plan for Grandfathered Clergy on Medical Leave with CPP Benefits & Under Age 65 Surviving Spouses of Clergy

	Medical Plans		Dental Plans		Vision
	PPO 500		Core	Major	
Employee Only	\$125		\$15	\$35	\$8.34
Employee + Spouse	\$190		\$40	\$100	\$15.05
Employee + Child(ren)	\$190		\$45	\$105	\$15.05
Family	\$205		\$55	\$115	\$24.19

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

Years of Qualifying Virginia Conference Service	Medical Plans			
	PPO Core		PPO Buy-up	
	Retiree	Family	Retiree	Family
10-14	\$725	\$1,800	\$840	\$2,205
15-19	\$640	\$1,460	\$785	\$1,785
20-24	\$490	\$1,115	\$600	\$1,365
25-29	\$340	\$775	\$415	\$945
30+	\$190	\$430	\$230	\$525

Years of Qualifying Virginia Conference Service	Dental Core		Dental Major	
	Retiree	Family	Retiree	Family
10-14	\$30	\$65	\$60	\$140
15-19	\$30	\$65	\$60	\$140
20-24	\$30	\$65	\$60	\$140
25-29	\$30	\$65	\$60	\$140
30+	\$30	\$65	\$60	\$140

	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

As detailed in Recommendation 1 above, VUMPI is recommending the adoption of the Via Benefits retiree medical program for all Medicare-eligible retirees beginning in 2026. Monthly Health Reimbursement Account funding from the Virginia Conference in 2026, which is based on the retiree’s health plan years of ministry credit, is recommended for all retirees who elect coverage through the Via Benefits program in 2026:

Years of Ministry	VA Benefits Funding
15-19	\$100
20-24	\$150
25-29	\$200
30+	\$250

The above funding amounts are intended to replicate the average Conference subsidy that has been provided to retirees in the current retiree medical program through United Healthcare. The above amounts will be provided to both the retiree and eligible spouses who enroll in coverage through the Via Benefits program.

The HRA 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 HRA 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.

As noted in Recommendation 1 above, the Conference-sponsored medical plan through United Healthcare that is currently in place for Medicare-eligible retirees of the Virginia Conference will continue to be made available to clergy who retire prior to 2026, along with their eligible spouses. For those retirees and spouses who wish to remain enrolled in the current program, 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 2026 participant contributions for the group plan coverage option are as follows:

Years of Service	Retiree Only	Retiree & Spouse
10-14	\$415	\$830
15-19	\$345	\$690
20-24	\$270	\$540
25-29	\$200	\$400
30+	\$130	\$260

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 eligible to select coverage through the current retiree medical program through United Healthcare and 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 2026 monthly RRA funding based on qualifying years of Virginia Conference service as follows:

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

The 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, 2026 health plan selections will be made during the open enrollment period in the fall of 2025. If an eligible clergyperson does not elect coverage options during the annual open enrollment period, the default enrollment option is the prior year’s plan selections (except for Flexible Spending Account or Dependent Care Spending Account contributions), and enrollees will be subject to the associated individual personal contribution rates.

If not selected during the open enrollment period, no Flexible Spending Account contributions can be made during 2026, in accordance with federal laws.

All who are eligible to enroll in a Virginia Conference health plan are strongly encouraged to participate in online open enrollment in the fall of 2025.

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

Virginia Conference clergy on approved leave or serving in an Extension Ministry appointment earn credit towards retiree medical plan eligibility only if enrolled in the Conference-sponsored health plan while on leave or while serving an Extension Ministry appointment.

Recommendation 5: 2026 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 2025, VUMPI recommends that the PSR be increased from \$626 to \$659.

Recommendation 6: 2026 CPP/Supplemental Plan Funding Recommendations

VUMPI recommends that local churches and salary-paying units with CPP-eligible clergy be billed 4.4% of total plan compensation (base salary plus housing allowance or parsonage factor, up to 200% of the Denominational Average Compensation) in order to fund the Virginia Conference's CPP and supplemental life insurance program premiums.

The recommended CPP and supplemental life insurance plan funding billing rate is consistent with the billing rate that has been in place for more than a decade.

Recommendation 7: Compass Automatic Features

Report 4 above reviewed several components of Compass, the denominational retirement savings plan being launched in 2026. As is indicated in that report, Compass includes automatic enrollment and automatic contribution escalation features, with specific automatic features to be approved by each annual conference.

VUMPI is recommending the Virginia Conference's approval of the following Compass automatic features:

- Automatic enrollment at 4% of total plan compensation
- Automatic escalation of 1% of total plan compensation in January of each year, with a cap of 10% on automatic escalation

If approved, clergy who are eligible for Compass and who are currently contributing less than 4% of compensation to the United Methodist Personal Investment Plan (UMPIP) will be automatically enrolled in Compass consistent with the above features.

Clergy currently contributing more than 4% of compensation to UMPIP will be enrolled in Compass at the current contribution level.

Clergy currently contributing to UMPIP using multiple contribution strategies, such as both traditional and Roth contributions, will be automatically enrolled at the current contribution percentages, and will not be subject to the 4% automatic enrollment or automatic escalation features. VUMPI encourages any clergy who will be enrolled on this basis, and who are currently contributing less than 4% of compensation to UMPIP, to consider increasing contributions in Compass in order to ensure eligibility for the full Compass matching contribution.

Any clergy contributing above the automatic escalation cap of 10% will be able to continue to do so. Contributions are limited only by Internal Revenue Code limitations on tax-advantaged retirement savings plan contributions.

Clergy will have the opportunity to opt out of automatic enrollment and/or automatic escalation. Information will be made available in the fall of 2025 for how to opt out of those automatic features.

Recommendation 8: Compass Billing

Consistent with Wespath's recommendation to all annual conferences, VUMPI is recommending the adoption of a Compass billing methodology that includes precise billing with full 4% match. The precise billing methodology indicates that VUMPI will bill the church or salary paying unit the automatic 3% of compensation, the actual clergy contribution election, and the monthly flat dollar \$150 contribution, prorated for appointment percentage. VUMPI will also bill the full 4% match, even in cases in which the Compass participant elects to contribute less than 4% of compensation. This recommendation is intended to eliminate any potential incentive for clergy not to contribute to Compass in order to reduce the matching contribution that will be paid by the church, and to support the objective of helping our conference's clergy prepare adequately for retirement.

Recommendation 9: 2026 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, 2026 through December 31, 2026 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.

– Nancy Johnson, Chair and John Fuller, VUMPI Executive Director

EXTENDED EXTENDED CABINET UPDATE

Last year, at the direction of Bishop Sue Hauptert-Johnson, members of the cabinet and conference leadership came together to form an “Extended Extended Cabinet”. Over their months of meeting, this group worked to develop a document that was shared at the 2024 Annual Conference session called “The Next Faithful Step: A Quadrennial Focus”.

As a reminder, that document included the underlying principle of our life together as the Virginia Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church (VAUMC): **“At God’s initiative, the Virginia Annual Conference exists to support the transformation of lives by facilitating Christ-centered connections between individuals, local churches, communities, and across the wide array of God’s creation.”**

The team discerned that this quadrennium, the VAUMC needs to make two pieces a priority:

1. Make time to grow in relationship with God and neighbor.
2. Define the practical roles of the Annual Conference, the District, and the Local Church within VAUMC.

Additionally, there was hope that the VAUMC would work to become an Annual Conference that:

- Embodies the fruits of the Spirit to live a transformed life.
- Follows Jesus in a way that leads to disciple-making.
- Practices extravagant inclusivity.

Since the 2024 Annual Conference, the Extended Extended Cabinet has not continued to meet, but the benchmarks they identified that could assist the Annual Conference in living out our ministry life together have been a central focus of the work of the Annual Conference in the last year. Those benchmarks are included below along with some updates of progress seen since we gathered in Hampton.

- **Developing a comprehensive leadership framework**
 - The Connectional Table model, shared on pages 96-98, is meant to be a step in this direction. Additionally, Bishop Sue has offered some organizational models within the conference office that can assist with staffing alignment to the ministry and missional assets of the Annual Conference.
 - Moving forward, living into the Connectional Table model will allow for the emerging of structured workflows and opportunities to refine our shared, comprehensive leadership framework.
 - Additionally, Conference and District staff members have had opportunities to meet together for times of collaboration, shared learning, and discernment around shared possibilities.
- **Engaging a culture of call**
 - In partnership with the Board of Laity, the Call & Candidacy committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry held the first Discernment Day in March 2025. This day provided safe space for those who are exploring a call to serve in their local churches, communities, as missionaries, and to the set apart ministry of the licensed and ordained. We anticipate more Discernment Days will be offered throughout the coming year.
 - The 2024 Youth Fall Retreat was centered on a culture of call with the theme, chosen by the Conference Youth Council, being “Called to Lead”. The retreat focused on equipping youth with tools to return to their local communities and congregations to serve in the ways that God is leading them.
- **Build a narrative budget**
 - The Council of Finance and Administration, the office of Communications, and the office of Connection and Innovation have worked together to create a narrative budget for 2026 that can be found on page 146-149 of the Book of Reports. This narrative budget, alongside the numerical budget, is meant to assist with telling the story of how finances contribute to the mission and ministries of the Annual Conference.

- **Tell great stories**

- The Office of Communications has been working within the Annual Conference office, with districts, and with local churches to cultivate the stories of how God is moving in and through the VAUMC. Those stories have come this year primarily in three forms:
 - The weekly Advocate newsletter provides subscribers with a weekly update on the news and stories driving the VAUMC.
 - Bright Spots video clips provide short multimedia engagements that give a window into the work of the local church around the Annual Conference.
 - A new quarterly publication, known as the “Q Source”, offers a window into the connectional work taking place in the conference office and in districts around the Annual Conference, giving local churches an opportunity to discern how to live in connection.

- **Emphasize a United Methodist “catechesis”**

- In the last year, Bishop Sue and Martha Stokes have convened a monthly Soul Feast webinar that offers direction and imagination around spiritual practices.
- As we anticipate the 2026 Annual Conference session, which will focus on the historical movement of Methodism, a new monthly webinar series will be forthcoming beginning this fall called “Wesleyan Ways: Exploring our Methodist Roots”. This series will offer participants the opportunity to explore our United Methodist heritage through the webinar conversations and additional reading resources that will be offered throughout the year.
- Efforts are ongoing to create an Advent curriculum for 2025 that will be available (but by no means required) for use conference-wide.

Connectional Table Experiment

Out of a desire to create a model for conference leadership that can be nimble, collaborative, and strategic, Common Table is considering an experiment with a new Connectional Table model. Since its inception, the goal of the Common Table has been to create strategies and plans that benefit the work of the local churches and of our connection. Despite our best efforts, conference programs across boards and committees can be piecemeal and siloed. The new model will seek to develop a more strategically focused centralized team which will work in collaboration with sub-teams grouped by disciplinary responsibilities and missional outreach. The model has the following features:

- A centralized team, referred to as the “Connectional Table” (CT), that has three sub-teams, referred to as the “Operations Team” (OPS), the “Leadership Development Team” (LD), and the “Church and Community Engagement Team” (CCE).
- This model is not meant to get in the way of the autonomy of boards; rather, it’s about finding the space for collaboration, prioritization, and strategy development around the Annual Conference.

The Connectional Table (CT) replaces the “Common Table”, mirroring the denominational leadership table. It would:

- Meet approximately 4-6 times per year
- Look at big picture, strategic vision and decision making that impacts the whole VAUMC
- Be a catalyst for the strategic and cooperative function of Conference boards
- Be shaped by a common covenant and practices of shared spiritual formation
- Membership would include:
 - Bishop
 - Conference Lay Leader
 - Assistant to the Bishop/Chief Operating Officer
 - Director of Belonging and Advocacy (clergy or lay)

- Operations convener (clergy or lay)
- Church and Community Engagement convener (clergy or lay)
- Leadership Development convener (clergy or lay)
- Clergy representative
- Lay representative
- District Superintendent representative
- Facilitator, Director of Connection and Innovation (clergy or lay)
- Conference staff and other experts as needed (non-voting)

The three sub-teams of the Connectional Table would:

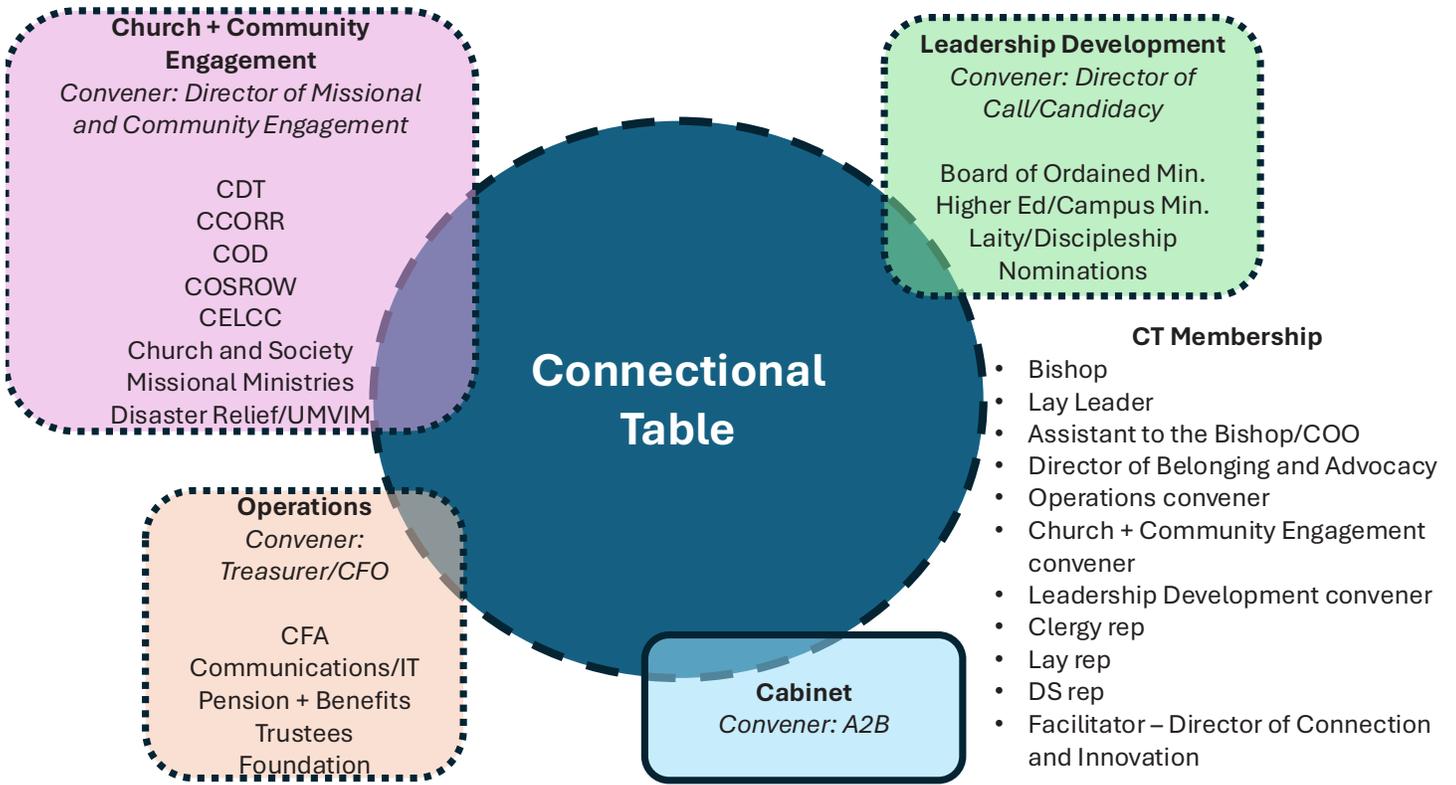
- Meet approximately 6-8 times annually
- Look at shared spaces for collaboration that are often strategic, occasionally tactical, and which impact broad population groups of the Annual Conference
- Be shaped by a common covenant and practices of shared spiritual formation
- Membership would include a staff representative and board representative from the following groups:
 - Operations
 - Convener – Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer
 - Council on Finance and Administration
 - Board of Pension and Health Benefits
 - Trustees
 - Virginia United Methodist Foundation
 - Communications/Information Technology
 - Leadership Development
 - Convener – Director of Candidacy and Call
 - Board of Ordained Ministry
 - Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministries
 - Board of Laity
 - Board of Discipleship
 - Conference Nominations Team
 - Church and Community Engagement
 - Convener – Director of Missional and Community Engagement
 - Church Development Team
 - Commission on Religion and Race
 - Commission on Disabilities
 - Commission on the Status and Role of Women
 - Commission on Ethnic Local Church Concerns
 - Board of Church and Society
 - Missional Ministries Board
 - Disaster Relief
 - United Methodist Volunteers in Mission

The newly formed Connectional Table will seek to live into this model for the 2025-26 appointment year. There would be intentional reviews in late fall 2025 and mid-spring 2026. Modifications to the team, sub-teams, and scope of work could come with those reviews. A proposal for a more permanent model would be created and shared with the Annual Conference for approval in June 2026 with total implementation scheduled for January 1, 2027. This planned proposal

would include necessary revisions to the Charter for the Common Table for Church Vitality and Conference Standing Rules.

A visual model of this Connectional Table experiment is included below.

–Bishop Sue Haupert-Johnson and Martha Stokes, Conference Lay Leader



COMMON TABLE FOR CHURCH VITALITY

This past conference year has been an active season for the Common Table for Church Vitality as we seek to fulfil our charge “to resource mission and ministry to fulfill the conference mission and vision.” (Virginia Conference Standing Rule V.A)

The Common Table spent significant time and energy in the last conference year working on...

- **...resourcing the local church.** The Common Table is especially thankful for all the staff who serve under the leadership umbrella of the Common Table. Our staff is composed of dedicated, faithful individuals who bring a wealth of talent and abilities to ministries that support the entire Virginia Conference. They are a passionate, strong presence working to bring about transformation in individual lives, in the local church, across our districts, and throughout the conference. Two new areas of ministry resourcing should be noted: (1) the *Hatching Faith Cohorts* initiative funded through a \$1.25 million grant from the Lilly Endowment Inc. is aimed toward helping congregations more fully and intentionally engage children in intergenerational corporate worship and prayer practices and (2) Growing Young which focuses on six key principles for churches that seek to more successfully engage young people in their ministries and church leadership.
- **...a vision of collaborative grantmaking in closer partnership with the districts, Church Development Team, Virginia United Methodist Foundation, and United Women in Faith.** Increased communication, greater accountability, and additional resources to assist local churches with opportunities and help applying for grants of all types demonstrates connectionalism at its best and can have a greater transformational impact in local communities.
- **...camping and outdoor ministries.** Much work has been done to equip specialized ministry camps – Camp Rainbow Connection and All God’s Children’s Camp – to meet ever changing needs and demands. Utilizing consultants with experience working with other Annual Conferences, a task force was organized to seek greater clarity around and strengthen the conference relationship with district camping and retreat ministries. This work is on-going.
- **... effective ministry systems that address new realities.** Working within the framework of *The Next Faithful Step: A Quadrennial Focus* affirmed by the 2024 Annual Conference, the Common Table has begun to address a comprehensive leadership framework to meet current needs. The Charter for the Common Table was first presented to the 2004 Virginia Annual Conference Session and became effective on January 1, 2006. In the proposal for moving from the old Council on Ministries to this new structure, the Common Table Task Force noted that this action would create “...a Common Table for Church Vitality that will provide vision, guidance and leadership in setting the ministry priorities for the Conference” in a “creative forum for leadership and strategic planning to equip and assist the ministry of the local church.” Much has changed since the original charter was adopted and even greater strategic alignment and innovation are called for as we look to the future. To this end, conference boards, committees, and commissions have been engaged in strategic discussions as to how best to resource the local churches and to strengthen engagement in missional engagement and community outreach for this time. Out of a desire to create a model for conference leadership that can be more nimble, collaborative, and strategic – twenty years after the adoption of the Charter for the Common Table for Church Vitality, the Common Table will experiment during the coming year with a new Strategic Leadership Team model and bring a proposal for a more permanent model to the 2026 Annual Conference with implementation scheduled for January 1, 2027.

As the Common Table, we joyfully share that our work has been filled with a deep sense of hope for all that is to come for the Virginia Conference of The United Methodist Church.

Martha Stokes, Conference Lay Leader
Rev. Dr. Jonathan Page, Director of Connection and Innovation
Dwayne Stinson, Director of Discipleship and Congregational Vitality

RECOMMENDATIONS

On behalf of the Missional Ministries Board:

That the Relationship Agreements as presented to the Conference Missional Ministries Board between the Virginia Conference and Heart Havens, Inc.; Pinnacle Living; UMFS; and Wesley Housing Development Corporation, be continued.

BOARD OF CHURCH AND SOCIETY

The conference Board of Church and Society is organized into 3 committees: 1. Peace and Non-Violence, 2. Creation Justice, 3. Ending Poverty and Protecting Civil Rights. These 3 follow the framework of the United Methodist Bishops' Letter to the Church in 2009 which called the Church to organize its social and ecological justice work along those lines,

We also partner with United Women in Faith to help members of the Annual Conference to meet with their Senators and Delegates in the General Assembly.

We submit this report to help the conference join with us in all this important work.

– *Jaydee Hanson, Lay Co-Chair, Ellen Comstock, Clergy Co-chair,*

Peace & Non-Violence (P&NV) Committee

Julianne Paunescu, Chair

Our vision: a world of peace that practices war no more, that turn swords into plowshares and guns into garden tools. The P&NV team supports initiatives and equips congregations to work for peace and end violence in our communities, country, and world. Our priority focus areas encompass Refugee & Immigration Response and Gun Violence Prevention (GVP).

Following God's call to welcome the stranger and love our neighbor, P&NV seeks to be a resource to the Virginia Conference and its congregations as they welcome, minister to, and advocate for refugees and immigrants. In light of recent government actions and mass deportation measures, we are planning ways to assist congregations as they respond to help our immigrant neighbors in this time of fear. Activities include:

- Sharing educational and advocacy resources in coordination with the General Board of Church and Society and its Migrant Accompaniment guidance, and in accordance with the UMC Social Principles and United Methodist Council of Bishops Pastoral Letter
- Advocating to end the suspension of the historic U.S. Refugee Admissions Program
- Introducing a resolution at Annual Conference opposing mass deportation of migrants and advocating for comprehensive immigration reform
- Advocating for legislation that helps immigrants and refugees on Methodist Day at the General Assembly
- Supporting Know Your Rights and Family Preparedness Planning events and access to toolkits and support resources for immigrants facing potential ICE actions, and for immigrant allies.

Following the Social Principles, P&NV supports common sense solutions for Gun Violence Prevention (GVP). Nearly 47,000 US residents died because of gun-related injuries in 2023, and there have been scores of mass shooting in the United States in 2025. Nevertheless, GVP measures work and have significantly reduced homicides in the last two years. Activities include:

- Virginia United Methodists for Gun Safety, a network for sharing information, resources, an advocacy opportunity (Information: speicherak@gmail.com)
- Encouraging learning about and responding to the gun violence crisis - UMC resource: Kingdom Dreams Violent Realities, bible study addressing gun violence as a spiritual and moral issue
- Advocating for passage of GVP legislation on Methodist Day at the General Assembly
- Participating in nationwide UMC GVP Network, sharing legislative updates, events, and activities.

Peace With Justice Special Sunday and Grant Program

Kenn Speicher, Peace with Justice Coordinator

June 15 2025 is Peace with Justice (PWJ) Sunday. This Church-wide Special Offering arrives at a critical moment. As wars, violence, and terror continue to plague our world, government programs for peacemaking and reducing violence are being eliminated. Christ's calls us to be peacemakers. Our Social Principles call us to seek justice and serve as reconcilers of conflict. This is why all United Methodists are encouraged to support Peace with Justice Sunday.

Contributions support programs that witness to God's demands for a faithful, just, disarmed, and secure world. 50% of the funds raised on PWJ Sunday stay within our Annual Conference to enhance and support local social justice ministries, which have included refugee response, education, and climate justice. The other 50% supports national and international peacemaking ministries and grants, encompassing issues such as Israel and Palestine, gun violence prevention, peace in Korea, nuclear abolition, and protecting social support programs.

Thirteen PWJ Grants were awarded in 2024 by the General Board of Church & Society. The 2025 grant process will be announced in July. Congregations can also apply for social justice projects through the VAUMC Board of Church and Society. Contact Jaydee Hanson or Kenn Speicher (PWJ Coordinator) for information.

Creation Justice Committee

Brian Christoffersen, Caretaker of God's Creation Coordinator

The 14-member Creation Justice team celebrates the opportunities God has given us over the past year to honor, protect, and advocate for the beauty and integrity of God's creation.

1. Recognized five VAUMC congregations with the Green Church (GCA) and Sustaining Green Church (SGCA) Awards at Annual Conference from 4 Districts. Future action: Support the Green Church award on all Districts. Process to become a Green Church is displayed at <https://vaumc.org/creationjustice/>
2. Actively supported Local Congregations and participated in congregational events including: creating backyard and church wildlife sanctuaries and events to provide knowledge, actionable tools, and foster deeper engagement in Creation Justice. Congregational leaders expressed gratitude for the Creation Justice team's presence and support and looked forward to future collaboration. Future Action: We remain committed to growing and strengthening Green Church District Teams across the conference while advocating for communities impacted by environmental injustices.
3. VAUMC Climate Summit: On March 8, VAUMC Climate Summit: Hope in Action for Creation Justice was offered at Randolph-Macon College and Duncan Memorial UMC. The event gathered stakeholders at Conference, District and local church levels to pray, listen, discern, and learn together with worship, a World Café small group conversation, keynote address by Michele Roberts (Environmental Justice Health Alliance for Chemical Policy Reform and Coming Clean) and twelve workshop offerings. Additional workshops encouraged youth participation.

The event explored our unique role as United Methodists in advancing creation care and environmental justice. <https://vaumc.org/event/vaumc-climate-summit-hope-in-action-for-creation-justice/> Future Action: assist Conference actions to honor its commitment to have a net-zero impact on the climate by 2050 and increase advocacy for environmental justice across the Conference.

End Poverty and Support Civil Rights

Rev. Archana Samuel (interim chair)

During this year, our committee has been challenged by the huge job that we have and are working to discern where we focus in the coming year that will make the most difference. We want to focus on how we best serve poor people and immigrants in Virginia and defend the rights of Black, Brown, Asian, Native American and LGBTQI people at time that they are being attacked by some politicians.

United Methodist Day at General Assembly

Karen McElfish, co-chair

On January 30, 2025, over one hundred United Methodists from throughout the Virginia Conference met at the Pace Center on the campus of Virginia Commonwealth University, to spend the day learning about social justice issues and meeting with their legislators.

Co-hosted by United Women in Faith and the Virginia Board of Church and Society, this annual event has been ongoing for more than 30 years.

History: In the early 1990s a member of United Methodist Women, serving as Mission Coordinator of Christian Social Involvement, and a member of the Virginia Conference Board of Church and Society formed the Conference Monitoring Team, to monitor bills and inform others in the Conference. Initially they organized a phone tree to encourage United Methodists to call their legislators and voice their opinions, to advocate for or against bills. Ultimately that phone tree became a daylong event in person in Richmond, with the first United Methodist Day at General Assembly held in 1993. The monitoring team became the Conference Legislative Network, with members from both United Women in Faith and Church and Society.

Current Structure: The team partners with the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy (VICPP), Virginia Interfaith Power and Light (VAIPL), and the Virginia Poverty Law Center (VPLC). These partner organizations provide guidance on current issues and legislation before the General Assembly. Staff members from each organization educate the gathered participants on the current bills before the legislature, as well as procedures and processes of law-making in Virginia. Each year the team picks several issues and related bills to follow, and with help from the partner organizations, develops a packet of fact sheets on the bills to distribute before the daylong event, allowing participants time to prepare for advocacy efforts. The choice of issues/bills to follow is influenced by guidance from our Social Principles, expressed interest of United Methodists in the Conference, and the ability to potentially affect passage of bills.

January, 2025: Bills followed included affordable housing, paid sick days, eviction protection, and incorporating community health and environmental justice in comprehensive planning for communities. The event started with an opportunity for more in-depth discussion led by staff of the partner organizations on potential bills the evening prior to United Methodist Day at General Assembly. Participation via in person or Zoom. The actual lobby day began early with a briefer version of the overview of bills and welcome addresses. Constituents of legislators were grouped together, with a guide to facilitate getting to offices and provide suggestions for effective meetings with the legislators. Appointments were made with senators and delegates, or their legislative aides.

After spending the morning at the General Assembly, participants returned to the Pace Center to debrief on the meetings with legislators. This time is also important for the partner organizations, who can then follow up with legislators with additional information.

Bishop Hauptert-Johnson addressed the participants on the importance of and call to deeper involvement in current-day social justice concerns. Sheila Herlihy Hennessee of the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy guided the group in ongoing advocacy opportunities throughout the year that participants should engage in. After the conclusion of United Methodist Day at General Assembly, participants have opportunities to engage further with the partner organizations such as serving as congregational liaisons, meet with legislators in their district offices, and conduct efforts in voter engagement.

The event was a success, with positive feedback from participants. Many thanks to the members of the Conference Legislative Network team who worked tirelessly to host the event.

THE CHURCH DEVELOPMENT TEAM

The Church Development Team (CDT) has entered a time of deep listening and discernment, as our mission has been to fulfill the All Things New vision of the Virginia Annual Conference. During the Annual Conference of 2008 members voted to begin 250 new faith communities in 30 years, the All Things New Vision. Using Conference resources, CDT has provided grants, guidance, and accountability to new faith communities and supports leadership opportunities that disciple more people, more young people, and more diverse people for Jesus Christ in Virginia United Methodism.

Recognizing that the world has changed since 2008, and have decided to enter a season on intentional discernment. During this time, we are inviting the Holy Spirit to guide us to what does CDT look like in 2025 and beyond. We will be conducting deep listening across our connection to learn what is working and how others are adapted to our changing world. We recognize almost every church is trying to do more with less, how can we best equip our churches to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

This year CDT is supporting Appomattox United Methodist Church and Nooma with a new faith community grant. CDT is supporting Restoration: Reston with a 2nd Mile Grant as they charter as an independent United Methodist Church.

This year CDT was a part of the Conference Grant making cooperative that included several funding partners. We are excited about the wonderful ministries who were selected to receive support who are working in cooperative ways with other ministries and churches.

This year CDT and the Cabinet partnered in providing Strategic Salary Support. The Cabinet recognized several churches have the potential for revitalization, and this Strategic Salary Support will provide funding and CDT will partner this year with additional resources to support these pastors and churches as they do the hard work of revitalization and reaching out once again to their community.

I want to thank the talented and gifted clergy and laity who serve on CDT. Their experiences and passion for church development will continue to bear fruit in the Virginia Conference. Additionally, I want to thank our Conference staff person, Rev. Amanda Miller Garber, Director of Missional Engagement, for her leadership and support this past year. Amanda brings her church planting experience to the Annual Conference staff and to the work of CDT. Finally, I want to thank all the local churches in the Conference. Apportionments paid through the sacrifices of local United Methodists provides the funding that makes great things happen with Church Development in Virginia.

–Stephanie Kimec Parker, Chair

THE BOARD OF COMMUNICATIONS

At first glance, the title “Board of Communications” might suggest a team that’s been quiet this past Conference year. In many ways, that’s true. And yet, beneath the surface, we’ve been working to lay the groundwork for meaningful change—change that we hope will lead to more effective, vibrant communication within, among, and around the Virginia Annual Conference.

Historically, the Board of Communications has served as a catch-all body, with its role often confused with that of our talented Conference Communications staff. This overlap has sometimes led to ambiguity and a lack of focus. Over the past year, however, we’ve sought to reimagine our identity—not simply as a group that completes tasks, but as a team that builds connection throughout the Virginia Conference.

Our process began with a conversation between me and our Conference Director of Communications, Madeline White. We discussed Bishop Sue’s call for all Boards and Agencies to take an inventory—to clarify their identity, evaluate their purpose, and discern how they can best serve as a resource to local churches and Conference bodies.

With that charge in mind, our Executive Team developed a plan for listening, reflection, and visioning. We named what many of us had long felt: that the Board often moved from task to task without taking the time to pause, reflect, and truly consider how we might serve the Conference more effectively.

We resolved to change that.

Through this season of discernment, we identified both our strengths and our growing edges. We’ve provided valuable training and facilitated resource connections, such as the T-Mobile 5G Business Internet Initiative. But we also recognized

a need to deepen relationships—particularly with local churches and districts—to better understand and respond to communication needs on the ground.

As we listened, we came to a difficult but important realization: our current structure was not vital in facilitating the kind of work we have been called to do. Too often, our systems kept us stuck in cycles of irrelevance rather than empowering us to lead meaningful, forward-looking communication efforts across the Conference.

In response, we've turned our attention to restructuring—starting with an examination of our bylaws and the standing rules that guide our work. At our May meeting (which as of this writing is yet to happen), the Board will vote on a new set of bylaws that will potentially transition us into a more adaptive model: a Communications Advisory Team. This structure is designed to position us not as an administrative board, but as a resource hub—ready to advise, train, and collaborate with churches and organizations across the Conference on effective communication strategies.

Though there is still work to do, we're already seeking a move in this direction by voting on our new bylaws and beginning to make necessary changes. We're committed to expanding our network and fostering a culture of shared responsibility and collaboration across the Annual Conference, and not just with those who are members of the Board or Team. We recognize that questions abound around communications in the church—from social media to live-streaming, newsletters to crisis messaging—and we want to be equipped to help churches navigate the hows of those questions with clarity and confidence.

This isn't about placing more responsibility at the top—it's about empowering more people across the Conference to engage in meaningful communication work. We want to remove barriers, reduce bureaucracy, and cultivate a network of communicators who are equipped, encouraged, and connected, so that we make better communicators of all who boldly proclaim the Gospel of Christ.

In short, we are in a season of transition—but it is one filled with hope. By taking this year to reflect deeply and chart a new path forward, we believe the Board of Communications can become a more vital, responsive, and effective partner in ministry for the Virginia Conference.

—Andrew Ware, President

DELEGATION TO THE GENERAL AND JURISDICTIONAL CONFERENCES

After a very full season of holy conferencing, your Delegation to the General and Jurisdictional Conferences have taken some time to renew. And still the work continues!

Since our last annual conference, the delegation has attended the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference at Lake Junaluska, NC. With no election of bishops, there was a lot of space in the schedule for conversation and connection across conferences. Claire Bowen led us through 3 Circles Practices around conversations of race, diversity and inclusion. This work came out of the 2022 November conference and a desire to make our work of holy conferencing more mindful around equity. While it was unique to not elect bishops, the gift of time allowed for continued work across conference lines as well as to celebrate the work of the worldwide church.

One major body of work that came out of the 2020/2024 General Conference (apart from a new *Book of Discipline!*) were four proposed amendments to the constitution. We will be voting on each of these proposed amendments at this annual conference. One of the proposed amendments pertains to Worldwide Regionalization.

Your delegation strongly supports this proposed amendment and the goal of moving towards regionalization. The primary purpose of regionalization is to allow for contextual ministry in every culture. Regionalization would provide equity across the globe rather than privileging one region over and against any other regions. Regionalization decentralizes the U.S. and allows for continued contextual ministry across the connection.

To support this proposed amendment is to affirm our Theological Task and Doctrinal Standards. The beliefs of the United Methodist church are not changing. If anything, this will allow for expansive ministry and continued partnerships around the world.

We, as your delegation see this as a means of moving forward and de-colonizing our denomination so that there is equity in our representation as well as our leadership.

Lastly, we would offer the following updates in regards to our work. In lieu of a General Conference in 2026, there

will be a Leadership Conference with 3 representatives from every Annual Conference as well as 50+ leaders from across the connection. We will continue to serve as your delegation until 2027.

Thank you for engaging us in prayer, holy conversations, questions, and the holy work before us. We are honored to serve in this way and we give thanks to God for the opportunity to lead.

–Rev. Lindsey Baynham Freeman & Mr. Warren R. Harper

BOARD OF DISCIPLESHIP

The Board of Discipleship spent the last year defining its purpose and clarifying its mission by responding to the following five questions:

Why do we exist?

How do we behave?

What do we do?

How will we succeed?

And what is most important now; that is, over the course of the next twelve months?

Using a Working Genius assessment and other tools to guide us through this process of discernment we were able to ascertain the following:

- Our mission (the reason for why we exist) is to equip and celebrate discipleship in local churches.
- Our core values (how we behave) includes being authentic, transparent, and open. We are also committed to building accountable relationships, yielding to God, and living into the Kingdom with preparedness and confident hope.
- What we do is to develop and recognize deeply formed spiritual leaders.
- How we will succeed will be measured through the following three anchors: resourcing/equipping, collaboration, and celebration.
- And finally, we determined that what was most important now was to empower local churches in their call to foster and nurture discipleship. We will meet this objective by collaborating experimentally with the Living Waters District on how best to equip churches for discipleship that transforms.

We will also continue to collaborate with the Board of Laity as we seek new structures and models for facilitating discipleship that is transformational. We are also committed to work at increasing the awareness of the One Matters and Denman Awards.

I would personally like to thank the members of the Board of Discipleship for their continued enthusiasm and zeal as the board and the denomination have weathered some very challenging times. It has been a pleasure serving as the board's chairperson for these last several years.

– Dr. Timothy D. Hazlett, Chair

CONFERENCE MISSIONAL MINISTRIES BOARD

General:

The VAUMC Missional Ministries Board (MMB) serves alongside the Conference's Missional and Community Engagement Ministries Office in resourcing and facilitating mission opportunities for district and local churches in serving together for the Kingdom of God. The MMB is currently structured into three teams – Missional Discipleship and Engagement, Missional Connection, and Partnerships of Hope. However, during the past conference year in “**doing mission,**” it has become more & more evident that the theology of mission has to encompass social and justice issues. More on this later in the report.

2024-25 Conference Year Ministries:

In last year’s report, the MMB’s planned near-term focus was to center on the following:

- Continue to support our missional partnerships
- Continue to plan for greater district and denominational mission impact
- Assess missional needs within communities, districts, our conference, and the world
- Go forth in missional ministry to the glory of God

I’m happy to report that working with the gifted leadership of the Missional and Community Engagement Office (Revs. Miller-Garber and Batteiger, and Ms. Lorelike); the MMB was able to support partnerships, plan for greater impact, and assess needs all while doing missional ministry to the glory of God! This all started with the introduction of the Lunch Labs initiative at AC2024. What better place to grab lunch and find out about innovative missional opportunities and learn from others – over 400 Annual Conference attendees did just that.

The MMB for years has had programs/agreements entitled Partnerships of Hope (POH) and Relationship Partners. During the past year, it was agreed to begin assessing our Partnerships of Hope countries/initiatives (Brazil, Cambodia, Haiti, Mozambique, Native American, and Vietnam) and develop general guidelines in addition to discernment processes when it came to finances. In line with this effort, the MMB recently met with our Relationship Partners (Heart Havens Inc., Pinnacle Living, United Methodist Family Services, and Wesley Housing Development Corp.) to further explore the need for collaborative opportunities in service.

Additional 2024-25 conference year highlights included:

- In-Person/Hybrid/Korean/Spanish/Youth Mission Encounter offerings
- Hurricane Helene relief and recovery efforts – assembling and shipping flood/cleaning buckets as well as deploying Early Response Teams (ERTs)
- Increased ERT Certification Trainings and United Methodist Volunteers in Mission (UMVIM) Leader Trainings
- UMC Giving Sundays and Virginia Advance Specials
- Directed Missionary Support
- Various Refugee response efforts
- Climate Summit participation

2025-26 Conference Year Focus/Plan:

As a result of our efforts and initiatives during the past year, and examining other Conferences’ missional alignments; the MMB is ready to explore a possible collaborative space which includes mercy, justice, and mission. Such an endeavor would not be an immediate change and would not forgo the basic tenets of missional ministries, but would afford our churches, districts, and conference an avenue to explore social holiness and impactful mission work.

Where to Find Additional Information:

Contact our Conference’s Missional and Community Engagement Ministries Office at <https://vaumc.org/missions/> to find Community-wide, State-wide, or World-wide mission opportunities. Learn all about the following missional ministries:

Mission Encounter	Disaster Response	Relationship Partners
Advance Specials	Camps	Partnerships of Hope
Missionaries	Gen Bd Global Ministries	United Methodist Committee on Relief
Ukraine Support	Global Mission Fellows	Mission Volunteers

You can even upload and share local church mission trip adventures & opportunities!!

PARTNERSHIP REPORTS

Heart Havens

Our Continuing Mission

Heart Havens remains steadfast in its mission, established over 25 years ago with the support of the Virginia United Methodist Conference: **to empower adults with developmental disabilities to live and thrive in their community.** We provide more than just housing; we foster family-like environments where individuals make personal choices, achieve their goals, and contribute meaningfully to the wider community. Our commitment is to ensure each person we serve finds a supportive, forever home with us.

Current Operations and Activities

Heart Havens currently operates eight four-bedroom group homes across Virginia and offers sponsored residential services, resembling a foster-family setting. These programs provide safe, nurturing environments and round-the-clock support where needed.

February was designated “Heart Havens Month” by the Virginia Conference, providing a valuable opportunity to share our mission and celebrate the individuals we serve. As a Virginia Conference Advance Special Mission, Heart Havens does not receive apportionments and relies entirely on the generous donations and engagement from churches, groups, and individuals like you. Your support during Heart Havens Month and throughout the year is vital.

Our volunteer program continues to thrive, with workdays held at each home in the spring and fall. We are grateful for the many United Methodist Churches, community neighbors, and local companies whose hands-on work helps maintain our homes beautifully.

Strategic Vision: Moving Forward (2025-2028)

In late 2024 and early 2025, Heart Havens undertook a comprehensive strategic planning process, facilitated by The Spark Mill, involving extensive input from stakeholders, staff, and the Board of Directors. This resulted in a three-year strategic plan centered on achieving our vision: **People with disabilities are successfully woven into the fabric of everyday life.**

The plan focuses on three primary goals:

- 1. Expand and Diversify Housing and Services:** Support individuals through personalized life planning, develop new homes in varied communities (rural, urban, etc.), and innovate service offerings (like respite or apartment living) to meet diverse needs, including exploring support for individuals without DD waivers.
- 2. Catalyze Widespread Community Inclusion:** Deepen residents’ community involvement, build strategic partnerships for needed services, and serve as a resource hub for information on community support.
- 3. Drive Sustainable Quality:** Diversify funding streams, enhance operations and staffing to prioritize individual needs, strengthen board governance, create comprehensive training for support professionals, and invest in staff development and well-being.

We believe achieving these goals will provide individuals with more choice, reduce isolation, foster greater inclusion and acceptance, and ultimately lead to a higher quality of life.

New Initiative: Virginia Beach Men’s Home Expansion

Stemming from our strategic goals and a direct community need, Heart Havens is planning to open a new home for men in Virginia Beach. Currently, our residences there exclusively support women. This initiative was sparked by a request from a local family whose son, deeply integrated into the Virginia Beach community through work, peer groups, and Special Olympics, wishes to live in a Heart Havens home. Recognizing this opportunity to fulfill our mission and support individuals within their established communities, we are moving forward with this expansion. We are actively seeking partnerships and funding for the necessary down payment, home repairs, furnishings, and initial supplies.

Gratitude and Call to Partnership

Heart Havens is profoundly grateful for the foundational and ongoing support of the Virginia Annual Conference and its members. Your financial gifts, volunteer engagement, and advocacy make our mission of empowerment possible, enabling

residents to live vibrant, independent lives. We invite your continued partnership:

- **Schedule a Speaker:** Share the Heart Havens message with your church or groups.
- **Plan a Heart Havens Sunday:** Utilize our available resources.
- **Donate:** Support our mission directly or through the Conference.
- **Volunteer:** Participate in workdays or explore other opportunities.
- **Partner:** Help us fundraise for specific initiatives like the new Virginia Beach home.

Your support ensures that Heart Havens continues to be a place where individuals with developmental disabilities are empowered to thrive.

—Rebecca Huff, CEO

Pinnacle Living

The old campfire song goes, “It only takes a spark to get a fire going and soon all those around can warm up in its glowing.” This is exactly what happened in the 1930s as churches who had previously been associated with the Baltimore Conference found themselves in the Virginia Conference. They brought with them love and concern for elders, and when in the Baltimore Conference, they had come to support and be excited about ministry with a Methodist home in Maryland. Through their call for support for seniors, a special committee was appointed, including the Executive Committee of the Conference Board of Hospitals and Homes, to study the matter. This special committee submitted its report to the 1944 Annual Conference meeting in Lynchburg, asking Bishop William Walter Peele to appoint a committee with authority to incorporate a board for the “Home for the Aged” and to seek out gifts, bequests, and offerings to support this mission.

Over eighty years since that Annual Conference vote. No one could have imagined at that time what senior living would be like today. Pinnacle Living continues this longstanding Wesleyan based tradition of Enriching Life’s Journey for seniors by the provision of housing, healthcare, and financial security at six communities in Virginia: Hermitage Deep Run, Hermitage Richmond, Hermitage Roanoke, Hermitage Three Chopt, Cedarfield and WindsorMeade. A keystone of our service is the Pathways to Wellness Program which focuses on ten domains of healthy living including a healthy body, creative expression, intellectual growth and spirituality. To learn more about the Pathways to Wellness, please download our latest Impact Report found at <https://www.pinnacleliving.org/about>.

Along with six senior living communities, Pinnacle Living manages the separate faithbased not-for-profit provider - Retired Clergy Housing Corporation—which provides attractive, affordable housing for clergy with residential needs.

Pinnacle Living remains committed to honoring our heritage and building upon our strong foundation as we create new opportunities for adults to age faithfully and well. A few of our significant accomplishments during the past year include: •

- More than 412 volunteers gave over 19,567 hours of service to engage with residents, community outreach, and organizational support. The number of volunteers and their gifts of time continue to rebound following the pandemic. If you and/or your church would be interested in connecting with one of our communities, you can find contact information for Volunteer Coordinators on the Pinnacle Living website at <https://www.pinnacleliving.org/volunteer>.
- Residents, community volunteers, and team members in partnership with 131 local organizations continued to do amazing work which impacted the broader community. To highlight just a few community connections, Cedarfield residents were involved with new intergenerational partnerships as they engaged with students from St. Christopher’s School’s Community Engagement Class. Residents at Hermitage Richmond loved connections through music and drama performances from Barack Obama Elementary School, Wesleyan Youth Choir, Veritas Lower School, and VCU Notes of Kindness. Hermitage Roanoke continued the resident-led “Hermitage Helping the Hungry” project to donate food to people who are unhoused in Roanoke. WindsorMeade continues to work with The Arc for on-site job coaching and placement for adults with disabilities.
- Pinnacle Living communities offered supervised internships, onsite training, and career exploration opportunities to 180 students last year, making a tremendous impact on the future workforce needed for aging services.
- Our Richmond communities—Cedarfield and Hermitage Richmond—along with the Pinnacle Living office were

recognized for the seventh year in a row as one of the Top Workplaces in the large size company category in the Metro Richmond Region. The Richmond area program is sponsored by the Richmond Times Dispatch.

- WindsorMeade was named a top workplace in the midsize company category for the third year through the Hampton Roads Inside Business Top Workplaces initiative.
- Efforts continue to enhance support for those living with Alzheimer's and other dementias and 194 new Dementia Friends were made in Virginia and four new Dementia Friends Champions trained.

A primary commitment to Pinnacle Living residents is the Samaritan Program. This program offers support to those Pinnacle Living residents who have been blessed with longevity and have outlived their financial resources. We extend our deepest appreciation to all local churches that included the Samaritan Program in your second mile giving. Each year we recognize the Virginia Conference top ten giving churches as Samaritan Award Churches. For Fiscal Year 2024, we are pleased to acknowledge the following congregations.

1. Trinity UMC, Richmond, Three Notch'd District
2. Reveille UMC, Three Notch'd District
3. Rocky Mount UMC, Mountain View District
4. New Hope UMC, Mission Rivers District
5. Fairmount UMC, Three Notch'd District
6. Saint Mark's UMC, Daleville, Valley Ridge District
7. Walker Chapel UMC, Northern Virginia District
8. Fairfax, Northern Virginia District
9. Trinity UMC, Lexington, Valley Ridge District
10. Westover Hills UMC, Three Notch'd District
11. Gum Spring UMC, Three Notch'd District
12. Duncan Memorial UMC, Three Notch'd District

Pinnacle Living is proud to be carrying on the tradition of advocacy and support for older adults that the Methodists of Virginia began discussing at Annual Conferences in the 1930s. We ask for your continued advocacy for the needs of older adults in your local community and across the Commonwealth. Our desire is to be the senior resource you turn to when you have any questions about aging issues or want to know more about what is available for seniors today. Together, as relationship partners in the mission outreach of the Virginia Conference, we can enhance health, wellness and faithful aging for all people as we strive for a culture in which age does not define the person. Thank you for your continued trust, hard work, prayer and generosity in support of the work of Pinnacle Living.

– Christopher P. Henderson, President and CEO

– Charles W. Wickham, Director of Donor Development

2025 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PINNACLE LIVING

We recognize these recommendations are the responsibility of the Missional Ministries Board and are traditionally included as part of the Common Table report and Council on Finance and Administration report. However, we do not want them to be forgotten.

1. The Relationship Agreement between the Virginia Annual Conference and Pinnacle Living be continued.
2. The period between Mother's Day and Father's Day be designated in support of the Pinnacle Living Samaritan Program, and each church promote an offering during this time dedicated to this purpose.

UMFS - United Methodist Family Services of Virginia

In 2024, UMFS continued to live out our mission as unwavering champions for high-risk children and families, collaborating with communities to help them reach their full potential. We serve children in foster care and children struggling with mental health and behavioral challenges through foster and adoption programs, specialized education schools, and residential mental health treatment programs. In 2024 we served 2,986 children and teens. We strive to support the entire family, helping us touch the lives of 10,004 individuals in 204 communities.

Since our founding in 1900, the churches of the Virginia Conference have partnered with us as advocates for high-risk children and families across the state. Churches help recruit and support foster and adoptive families, serve as volunteers in UMFS programs, provide much-needed financial support, and donate countless gifts-in-kind. Church partners and the UMFS Auxiliary are critical resources for the children and families at UMFS and have helped us touch the lives of countless children and families over the past 125 years.

As we celebrate a major milestone anniversary in 2025, we continue to pave the way for our ongoing legacy of care. This year, we have made strides towards renovating our gymnasium and recreational center to provide more opportunities for healing through movement and play for the students and residents on our Richmond campus. We have also expanded our Food Forest, an edible landscape at our Charterhouse School run by students and volunteers and aiming to provide opportunities for us all to practice generosity and connect more with the food we are eating. Lastly, we have expanded our Generosity Collective initiative, leaning on our 125-year legacy of generosity in our community to fuel our growing partnerships in the community.

We have continued to form deeper partnerships with grassroots organizations who share our mission of empowering high-risk children and families to achieve a brighter future, providing collaborative environments for us to thrive together. Our Generosity Partners include these organizations: Caring Closet, Fit4Kids, Happily Natural, Methodist Ministries Newtwork, Rise Above, Shalom Farms, VAISEF, Virginia Kids Belong, Voices for Virginia's Children, Work of Art, and Worthdays. These organizations can operate rent-free on our Richmond campus, reaching more individuals and extending their mission. There is power and strength in partnership.

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's partnerships like yours that have allowed us to serve Virginia children and families for 125 years, and we are excited to build on this legacy and partnership as we approach the next 125 years of impact. We ask for your continued advocacy for high-risk children, youth, and families. Together, we can create a world where care, opportunity, and generosity are passed on from generation to generation, empowering all children to contribute to society as engaged citizens.

– *Kate Ockerman, Director of Philanthropy and Volunteerism*

Wesley Housing

Wesley Housing's (WH) vision is that everyone in Virginia and Washington, DC has a safe, quality, affordable home, serving as a foundation to thrive, and has a place of value in the community. This guides our mission of building up the lives of our most vulnerable community members by creating and operating healthy, inclusive, stable, affordable housing communities and providing supportive resident services. For more than 50 years, we have been building, managing, and maintaining high quality affordable housing for over 35,000 residents. We currently own 42 communities serving 4700+ residents throughout Virginia and Washington, DC. We also manage 14 Community Resource/Support Service Centers that offer a full range of crucially needed programs and services to support children, adults, older adults, those with chronic disease, and those with disabilities to regain their dignity and renew their lives.

REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT

WH currently has 850+ affordable housing units in the pipeline, including new construction, acquisitions, and renovations. Recent updates include:

- In January, **Beacon Landing** (54 units, Fairfax), a permanent supportive housing community in partnership with nonprofit homelessness services provider The Lamb Center, was awarded a \$1M Affordable Housing Program General Fund award from the Federal Home Loan Bank of Atlanta. The community for previously homeless individuals

expects to break ground in Summer 2025.

- **Kindred Crossing** (95 units, Falls Church), in partnership with First Christian Church of Falls Church, was awarded \$7.9M and 37 Project Rental Assistance Contract (PRAC) units through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Section 202 funding in January. The new independent living community will ensure older adults with low incomes have access to safe, affordable housing and supportive services.
- In March, the **Melwood-Wesley Inclusive Community** (105 units, Arlington) in partnership with Melwood, a leading employer, advocate, and preferred provider of services for people with disabilities, received site plan approval to transform Melwood's current building into a five-story mixed-used development with a large portion of units providing preference for people with disabilities. The property will also feature 17,000 SF of ground-level space for Melwood Community Services' programming.
- **One Hawaii** (70 units, Washington, DC [Ward 5]) continues making construction progress with anticipated completion at the end of 2025. The multifamily community is replacing the former 34-unit apartment building and will offer a safe and affordable place to live for households earning between 30 and 80 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI).
- In October 2024, The U.S. Department of the Treasury's Community Development Financial Institutions Fund awarded WH \$3.75M through the fiscal year 2024 round of the **Capital Magnet Fund**. WH will leverage these funds to support the early-stage financing of at least 365 units across its housing portfolio, including new construction and rehabilitation.

RESIDENT SERVICES

- **Housing Stability Initiative:** In 2024, 1,351 households accessed linkage and referral services (connections to community resources). Through the work of our resident services team, 286 evictions were prevented, 18 residents received new or more gainful employment with the help of our employment specialists, 346 residents participated in health and wellness offerings, and 1,884 residents received material assistance (i.e. food/hygiene items). This summer, we served 85 youth through our *Quest* summer enrichment program, and successfully launched our *Odyssey* initiative for older adults, engaging 180 participants. In addition, through our annual *Supplies for Success* program, 455 K-12 students received new backpacks filled with supplies, and 600+ residents received holiday assistance through our annual *Holiday Help* campaign.
- **Volunteerism:** Over the last year, 76 volunteers provided 5,300 hours of service by helping with food security initiatives, afterschool programs, board service, summer camp, photography, capacity building as graduate-level interns, and more.

OPERATIONS AND ADMINISTRATIVE

- WH leadership in collaboration with strategic planning consultancy, The Spark Mill, finalized a new strategic plan for 2025-2029.
- In March 2025, WH completed its merger with Virginia United Methodist Housing Development Corporation (VUMHDC) expanding our footprint through southern and southwest Virginia and increasing our portfolio by over 30 percent.
- WH concluded its 50th anniversary in 2024 and was recognized by the Virginia General Assembly with a commending resolution on February 7, 2025.

RESOLUTIONS OR RECOMMENDATIONS: None

—Kamilah McAfee, President/CEO

CAMPUS MINISTRY ASSOCIATION

Community College Ministries

Community College Ministries was formed in 1984 to create an ecumenical witness to Christ's love, mercy, and hope among students in the emerging network of community colleges from the far southwest to central Virginia. Today, that witness encompasses 10 campuses in partnership with dozens of congregations. Community College Ministries is all about empowerment—of African American students embarking on inspiring educational and career opportunities, of students coming from foster care settings, of students seeking retreat and renewal, of partnerships for home repair in Appalachia, and of single parents all making a new life with love, mercy, and hope. Contact Rev. Steve Darr at stevedarr@vaumc.org or board president Sandy Saunders at sandysaunders589@gmail.com for more information.

Where would you contact high school seniors preparing for classes at New River Community College this fall? Community College Ministries in Christiansburg. Where would you find a 32-year-old single mother after work behind a row of computers learning cyber security technology so she could get a better paying job? Community College Ministries, her source of encouragement. Where would you find an 18-year-old who dropped out of school sitting at a donated laptop applying for his GED so he could attend the community college? Community College Ministries. Where would you find Ms. Angie with two girls, ages 12 and 13, both terribly despondent and anxious and worried and angry and crying and pregnant? Community College Ministries, a source of hope in coming years. Where would you find a 24-year-old young father who spent his life in foster care and now commuting between two jobs, church, and the community college? Community College Ministries. Where would you find Jamesia when she's not working with United Methodist Family Services? Community College Ministries in Lynchburg. Where would you find Ty after he visited the White House with Community College Ministries? You would find him on the school board. Where would you find the first community college food pantry? Community College Ministries in Dublin. Where would you find a group of 10 tired, sweaty, hungry students on a late November afternoon in a struggling coal town? With their professor of construction and campus minister building an accessible ramp for a 92-year-old resident who had repeatedly fallen outside her place in Trammel. Where would you find a group of students from the Wesley Foundation at the College of William & Mary listening first-hand to an eye-witness history of the Civil Rights Movement in southern Virginia? Community College Ministries in Danville. Where would you find 22 African American youth and pastors talking about their faith in the Chapel and watching basketball in Cameron? At Duke hosting Community College Ministries. Where would you find students on a hot weekend in June reaching out to street kids in Memphis? Community College Ministries. Where would you find a campus ministry group from Tech on a beautiful fall Saturday? Hosted by Community College Ministries floating the scenic New River in Giles County. Half of all college students in Virginia attend a community college. Some go on to other studies. Some get jobs. Our mission is to share Jesus with current and future community college students and make Disciples. These community college Disciples are walking the path, carrying the load, sharing the Word, and witnessing to love and justice in the name of our Lord. The campus minister is Steve Darr. The board president is Sandy Saunders. The board vice president is Muriel Mickles. We love to tell the story.

— Steve Darr

Farmville Wesley

The Wesley Foundation at Longwood University and Hampden-Sydney College works to be a place where college students can come and just be. We have spent the last year focusing on the mental health of our college students. Like most of the world our college students are struggling to navigate this world and add in the pressures of college, we have spent the year giving our students a place to explore their faith in a safe place. Wesley has become a place where students can come and rest and recharge. We continue to find that something as simple as a home cooked meal around a table with other students allows them to be reminded they are not alone in this journey. We have also worked to strengthen our relationship with the United Methodist churches around us. The student lead, student focused food pantry for Longwood continues to be a place where Wesley is providing a safe space for students to meet the very simple needs of college life. We appreciate all the support we receive from the conference, Living Waters district, and our local churches. We could not do what we do without this support. We are looking forward to a strong finish to this school year and the year to come.

— Justin Hicks

Flourish

Flourish CNU continues to be the only fully-inclusive campus ministry among a dozen different Christian campus ministries on a largely traditionalist campus of ~6000 students. We offer a safe and supportive space for those who have been made to feel unwelcome either at home, church, among their classmates, and even other campus ministries. Fittingly, most of our students are LGBTQ+ and/or neurodivergent.

This year, we were invited to CNU's second-annual LGBTQ+ Resource Fair. We were the only faith-based organization represented. It was great exposure and also a wonderful opportunity to network with the faculty Affinity group.

We maintain an active pastoral presence on campus, with a Tabling Ministry on Wednesdays and Thursdays in the Student Union available for students not only to take information (and cool stickers, buttons, etc), but also as a "listening post" for anyone who could use a sympathetic ear. Each Wednesday evening students are welcome to come and relax in a room full of coloring books, art supplies, and unguided but surprisingly deep conversation at our "Create Space" art therapy event.

Our Weekly Gathering, which is a service of Word and Table offered every Thursday evening, is our best-attended event and offers a peaceful and reflective alternative to the more common praise-and-worship services offered by the campus's other ministries. This is especially appreciated by our neurodivergent students.

Our Exam Snacks Ministry, our longest-running ministry, allows our local partner churches to take shifts coming onto campus during Finals Week giving out snacks, drinks, and exam supplies (scantrons, blue books, pencils and pens) to stressed-out students. The week before Finals each semester, our students take a trip to the local Cat Café for a decompression session with the kitties.

Also worthy of note: this year, we celebrate our alumna Jonelle Brown (BA '20, MAT '21), who has been involved with Rev. J.J. Warren's Young Prophets Collective for some time, but who has now taken on a position as Secretary of the Board of Directors of that wonderful organization!

We remain committed to making and holding space for those whom the world considers "the least of these," especially as the dehumanization and demonization of these beloved human siblings deepens.

– Michael Burnett

Pace

The Pace Center is the Wesley Foundation at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU). Pace believes the Kingdom of God is a reality to be experienced by all and that all are created to live in deep relationships with one another, not in isolation.

Pace empowers students to create and lead community-building events that focus on the gifts of the VCU community and the Richmond community. In 2024, the Pace Center hosted an average of 20 student-led events each week. We engaged with 1,098 unique students. Our core community of regularly engaged students grew from 265 students in 2023 to 365 in 2024. Pace's Faith-based offerings also expanded. In 2024, we began a new student-led worship service with VCU's Black Awakening Choir as a partner.

Pace serves a high-needs population of VCU students, many of whom are low-income and food-insecure. In order to better accommodate the 100+ meals served at Pace each week, we fundraised over \$20,000 to purchase a commercial dishwasher, refrigerator, and kitchen island.

Pace partnered with Belmont Community Resource Services and churches in Downtown Richmond to engage 120 unique student volunteers to serve in their food ministries. Pace adds a reflection component to each service opportunity to ask students where they saw God's gifts reflected in the Richmond community. To quote one volunteer during our summer Youth Servant Leadership camp: "God was working through everyone around us. Even when someone was struggling to survive, there was beauty in their talent and beauty in how they expressed themselves."

– Katie Gooch

William & Mary

Finishing my first year as the Wesley Foundation Director at William & Mary has been a joy and gift! Despite the inherent challenges of a transition season, our student leadership team stepped forward in incredible ways in the fall. Our Sunday night programs are growing more robust, with meals provided by local church partners and a program on the intersection of faith and various topics. This year, topics included resisting Christian Nationalism, the revised United Methodist Social Principles, reclaiming a healthy relationship between mental health and faith, and an LGBTQ+ clergy panel sharing stories of call and vocation.

We traveled to Arlington during fall break to work with Northern Virginia Family Services' Head Start program. Spring break Staycation focused on local outreach opportunities while addressing limited accessibility to dining options for students remaining in town that week.

With several of our incoming students longing for more spiritual formation, we launched weekly worship and communion with student-led music.

Our residential community is fostering more intentional rhythms together through dinners and game nights. We are excited to share that the Wesley House will be at capacity for the 2025-2026 school year, as we had many applications!

I write this with deep gratitude for our local board and new development team, who are leading an amazing annual campaign as we share the Wesley at W&M story. I have great hope, knowing that despite the myriad challenges the denomination has endured in recent years, students long for a place to belong.

—Ryan LaRock

Wesley Westminster Campus Ministry at Norfolk State University

Wesley Westminster Campus Ministry at Norfolk State University is an ecumenical ministry that offers a sense of family, support, and purpose. This is exhibited through discipleship, Bible Study, providing food for the food insecure and participating in community service endeavors. I have been told that we are known for our parties and for our cookouts. Many students who participate have not had church or youth group experiences. So, we have an exceptional opportunity to provide a place to grow in faith as a new believer. At least 5 students committed their lives to Christ this past semester. We journey in faith, supporting one another, all while cultivating new friendships and taking on leadership roles.

Together we celebrated the graduation of 4 of our student leaders in December. We hosted more than 120 students for our end of the year celebration. As a ministry we have planned events to address mental health needs, connect students with therapists and mentors, as well as provide grief support. There is no campus ministry like our campus ministry. We love to have a good time. Celebrating Black History Month, enjoying glow parties, and expressing ourselves during Paint and Praise are just a few of our highlighted activities.

—Joy Carrington

Wesley at Old Dominion University

The Wesley Foundation at Old Dominion University, also known as Wesley ODU seeks to explore faith alongside the students, faculty, and staff of ODU, providing a welcoming space where individuals are encouraged to be authentically themselves. WesleyODU

One of the ways WesleyODU seeks to be in service to those on campus is our Tuesday Free Lunches, held every Tuesday, offering students a chance to enjoy a complimentary meal often provided by local congregations. We saw a dramatic increase in participation averaging more than 30 students each week and are so thankful for the many local churches who brought delicious meals.

Last fall our student leadership had a desire to grow beyond just our small group to having consistent worship. We host worship services every other Wednesday night. These services include fellowship, praise, and a brief message, often followed by activities such as making s'mores. Additionally, our weekly small group happens every Thursday night at 7:30 PM, featuring devotion and discipleship discussions aimed at deepening our faith as we journey together.

One recent grad had this to say about WesleyODU "I decided to join WesleyODU because I was looking for a home

away from home and had been searching for a church family. I grew up in the United Methodist Church and knew that was something I wanted to find during my time on campus. WesleyODU has given me great leadership experience and helped me make new friends.”

None of this would be possible without the generous support of donors, local churches, and our conference/district apportionment funds. Wesley also wouldn't be where it is without the diligent work of the local board. For more information or to get involved please visit our website www.wesleyODU.org or you can contact Wesley ODU via email at TheWesleyODU@gmail.com.

—Joshua McCauley

Campus Christian Community at the University of Mary Washington

This past year at the Campus Christian Community (CCC) has provided many aspects of growth, discipleship, and fellowship. We are thankful for the continual support of the BHECM as well as our many other supporters that continue to see the importance of investing in Campus Ministry. The Board of Directors continues to work to lead the CCC and invest in the lives of the students.

This past year we have seen an increase in student desire to learn more about the Bible, spiritual disciplines, and peace and justice ministries. This has provided many opportunities for conversations about various topics and how faith intersects.

We have continued our Faculty and Staff “get togethers” to bring together faculty and staff that are connected to the supporting churches of our ministries. This has been such a joy and blessing to create space for them to come and talk about faith, vocation, and other connections they have as employees of the university.

We continue to encounter new students and find ways to connect on campus with various groups and organizations. This past year we have studied the prophets and the book of Revelation in our Bible Study. Bible Study is a great time for students to have conversations and ask questions about faith and life as we encounter God through scripture.

One of our most attended weekly events is Table Talk on Thursday evenings. We gather for dinner, conversation and then either worship or an activity. This past year we have been so thankful to bring back in our supporting churches to come and provide the meals for students! This is a great opportunity for students to meet congregants of the supporting churches and also for the congregants to get to spend time getting to know the college students!

Overall, we are thankful for the support of many and are excited to see where God leads us in the upcoming year!

—Elizabeth Snader

Wesley at UVA

Wesley at the University of Virginia is a community on the edge of Grounds (the UVA term for campus) where students are seen, welcomed and valued, nurtured as leaders who make a difference in the world, invited to be curious and share authentically, and can find the pastoral support and faith formation that they are longing for during their time in college and graduate school.

During the 2024-2025 academic year, Wesley at UVA focused on expanding our outreach. We hosted invitational events such as a Welcome Bonfire and Cookout where we met over 120 students on the day before classes. Listening to what students needed led us to launch a brand-new First Year (freshmen) Small Group. We also partnered with faith communities across Grounds for larger events like Friendsgiving and sharing flowers on Valentine's Day. We supported the Muslim community in finding a chaplain and they identified Wesley as a safe space which led to them launching the new Center for Muslim Life at UVA in our building. We partnered with them on our 2nd annual Interfaith Iftar in March, exploring our faiths' traditions of fasting during Lent and Ramadan, hosting over 80 students in the Wesley and Muslim faith community.

Our student leaders noticed a rise in peers who are religiously curious, interested in faith but reluctant to walk into a church building for a variety of reasons. During the spring semester, we organized a forum series of speakers to explore some of their questions. We kicked this off with a forum on faith and science in one of the Pavilions (faculty housing on UVA's Lawn) and continued in conjunction with our Tuesday night dinners.

To quote one of our first year students, “Wesley is another home for me, a place I have found community!” Thank you for all the ways that you support Wesley at UVA and make all that happens here a reality.

—Devon Maust Earle

RISE

RISE is a ministry rooted in God’s risk-taking love, life-changing grace, passionate outreach and open-armed acceptance. As one of the only openly affirming campus ministries at James Madison University we seek to be a welcoming space for all. Everyone is welcome and, Everyone means EVERYONE.

The 2024-25 academic year brought in some major changes for RISE! Our founding Pastor moved on to a new chapter of her ministry and we welcomed Alexis as our new Campus Minister. We moved locations and now have the opportunity to share space with John Wesley UMC, which has been such a blessing! By allowing us the space to use the fellowship hall at JWUMC, we were able to expand our worship offerings for students from our usual Sunday morning experience to incorporating a Wednesday evening dinner church as well.

A core value at RISE is “God gives to us, so we give back”. Just like many of the other campus ministries, we focus a lot of time and energy on leadership development. Our hope is that we are able to launch our students into the world and hopefully back into your churches as leaders who are well equipped to contribute in a variety of ways. One of our graduating seniors said, “This is the place I have come to call home and a family I have come to love. As I’m preparing to graduate and move onto another city, I hope to create honest communities like RISE everywhere I go. As hard as it will be to leave, I can be RISE to those who may never walk through their doors. I can show the authentic love of God, I know I am a gift to this world and one by one we are working to mend it together.” This is why it is important to continue to support our UMC campus ministries. The future of our church depends on young adults having the opportunity to see and experience the value of a community of faith.

–Alexis Ward Owens

BOARD OF LAITY

A task group was formed within the Board of Laity in 2023 to evaluate the role and work of the District Lay Leader and Associates as we seek to meet emerging lay leadership needs. With the number of districts declining but the geographic area of the Virginia Annual Conference remaining the same, changing the priorities of the District Lay Leader and recruiting and empowering Associate District Lay Leaders has become urgent. A final report and recommendations from the work group were affirmed at the September 2024 meeting of the Board of Laity. The vision is for the District Lay Leader(s) and the District Superintendent to work together to divide each district geographically into smaller community clusters or cohorts. These “clusters” would be small enough that an Associate District Lay Leader (ADLL) could develop a vital relationship with each Local Church Lay Leader (LCLL) and other laity in the churches. The ADLL would serve as the point of contact and communication from the district level and a resource to the LCLL of these churches. But just as important, the “clusters” would be set up with the intent that these churches would begin to work together in mission and ministry to meet the discerned needs of their shared geographic area based on community engagement. The Board of Laity (BOL) will use the next conference year to begin living more fully into this model before bringing recommendations to the 2026 Annual Conference for formal revisions to the structure of the board.

The Board of Laity has traditionally met in-person twice a year. For this year, the BOL agreed to add virtual 1-hour monthly learning and information sharing meetings during the fall, winter and spring. Bishop Hauptert-Johnson joined the meetings in February and April. Other monthly meetings included a listening session with the Young Adult Council, a training on the *Growing Young* research from Fuller Youth Institute, and an orientation for new District Lay Leaders and Associates.

One of the areas of work for the Board of Laity and a benchmark of the *Next Faithful Step Quadrennial Focus* affirmed at the 2024 Annual Conference is strengthening the culture of call for the laity. As part of this focus, the BOL worked in partnership with the Office of Clergy Excellence and Office of Discipleship and Congregational Vitality to offer the first Discernment Day for laity on March 15, 2024. Twenty-six individuals gathered at Ebenezer UMC in Stafford to learn more about a range of opportunities for ministry, from serving as a leader in the local church to Certified Lay Ministry, from justice work and global missions to ordination and licensing as clergy.

Successful Conference Lay Servant Academy sessions were held in August 2024 and February 2025. District Lay Servant training sessions are active and ongoing. Certified Lay Ministry training offered by our conference has grown

significantly, with the fifth cohort of students starting this spring. Nineteen participants in CLM Cohorts 2 and 3 will be recognized as Certified Lay Ministers at this Annual Conference. Twenty-five students are participating in Cohorts 4 and 5. The Virginia Conference has partnered with the New York Conference to offer the Certified Lay Ministry modules for their laity. As part of this collaboration, subject area experts from both Virginia and New York have been invited to deliver guest lectures. It is exciting to note that six current participants in our CLM module training are from the New York Conference. In addition to our conference cohorts, individuals will be recognized at our Annual Conference who have CLM received training through BeADisciple.com.

The focus of Lay Servant Ministry training opportunities is on helping laity discern their call to share the Gospel and God's Word with people they encounter, to help each person identify their spiritual gifts, and enhance their skills in leading, caring and communicating ministries. Now – more than ever - is the time to get involved, to make a difference in the life of your church and your community. God is calling you. How will you respond? To explore Lay Servant Ministry, including Certified Lay Ministry, visit the Lay Servant Ministry pages of the VAUMC website or reach out to Richard Speirs, Director of Lay Servant Ministries at richardspeirs@vaumc.org.

The vision for Scouting Ministries is to build a bridge of understanding, enablement, encouragement, and service between the Virginia Conference and Scouting America, Girl Scouts, Camp Fire, and Big Brothers Big Sisters. Five goals have been established for our conference Scouting Ministries:

1. Develop an understanding of the current state of the relationship between the civic youth service organizations and the Virginia Conference. An initial survey was sent to clergy about relationship with these organizations in April. The information gathered will help us understand the current level of engagement between local churches and the civic youth organizations.
2. Improve relationships with the youth organizations in Virginia by better understanding the expectations and needs of youth organizations as we seek to build and enhance healthy, positive relationships with key leaders. Introduction meetings with the senior leadership of all the Scouting America councils in Virginia have taken place this year.
3. Create a foundation of support for Scouting Ministries across the conference, strengthening the relationship with the United Methodist Men and building deeper relationships with District Superintendents and District Lay Leaders as we seek to educate clergy and laity on Scouting Ministries.
4. Help youth grow in their faith through Christian education within the youth organizations.
5. Build connections and relationships with other Methodist Scouters and The UMC United Methodist Men's Foundation Office of Civic Youth-Serving Agencies/Scouting Ministries.

For additional information about Scouting Ministries, contact Alan Webber, Conference Director of Scouting Ministry, at aewebber33@gmail.com or visit the Scouting Ministry pages of the Conference website.

God has called each and every one of us to be ambassadors of the Gospel message in the world today – to share our own faith experiences and to be examples of Christ's love to the world through our everyday living. Sometimes we think that receiving a call from God is only for those who go on to set-apart ministry of the licensed and ordained. But no, God calls each of us by virtue of our baptism to ministry. On behalf of the Board of Laity, thank you for the many and varied ways you live out your baptismal vows, equipped by the Holy Spirit in the work of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

– Martha E. Stokes, Conference Lay Leader

UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

Faith, hope, and love in action – United Women in Faith!

Our purpose states: “United Women in Faith shall be a community of women whose purpose is to know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ; to develop a creative, supportive fellowship; and to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church.” Our actions are guided by this purpose.

To know God, to grow in faith, we encourage the practice of spiritual disciplines. We pray for one another, for mission workers and mission projects. We participate in programs on spiritual growth and discipleship. We host district and conference **Spiritual Life Retreats**.

To experience freedom as whole persons, to grow in hope, we work on our social justice priorities, which include ending mass incarceration of people of color and climate justice. We cohost **United Methodist Day at General Assembly**, advocating for justice for our neighbors. We respond to United Women in Faith Action Alerts. We utilize our “13 Steps to Sustainability” principles to guide event planning. We implement the **Charter for Racial Justice** policies, hosting racial justice events.

To develop a creative, supportive fellowship, to grow in love, we gather virtually and in person, at our local units, in our districts and at the conference. We host a **Young Women’s Event**. We attend **United Women in Faith Day at Ferrum College**, which we helped to found. We gather for our **Annual Meeting**, to do the business of the organization and most importantly celebrate the work we accomplish. We attend our United Women in Faith national **Assembly**.

To expand concepts of mission, to grow in love, we read from **response** magazine and books on our reading program, to understand the missional needs of the world. We host **Mission u**, our school of Christian mission, educating to transform the world. We support mission projects globally and locally, including the **National Mission Institutions** of United Women in Faith. We hold hands-on missions and put together UMCOR kits. We pledge our financial support of mission work at home and abroad.

Join us in our local units, as a district at-large member, or as an All-Access member through the national website.

Join us in our two social justice campaigns: **Ending the School-to-Prison Pipeline** and **Just Energy for All**.

Join us at our events (go to our website for more information vauwf.org):

Pre-Annual Conference Zoom Tea and Talk	June 7, 2025
Mission u	July 25-27, 2025
Young Women’s Event	September 19-20, 2025
Annual Meeting	October 25, 2025
United Methodist Day at General Assembly	January 29, 2026
Spiritual Life Event	April 17-18, 2026
United Women in Faith Assembly	May 15-17, 2026

United Women in Faith – we believe faith, hope, and love in action can change the world!

–Karen McElfish, President

UNITED METHODIST MEN

The Virginia Conference UMM (VAC UMM) are excited to report on our ministry Objectives and Goals. This is our major accomplishment this year! Each objective has a goal as to how we plan to accomplish the objective followed by an action plan with a timeline. Our six objectives are:

1. Encourage individual spiritual development
2. Encourage and support women clergy
3. Improve race relations
4. Engage with campus ministries and younger men
5. Embrace Scouting
6. Advocate for environmental issues and creation care

We will be working alongside each district to ensure that they establish the same objectives just as we established our objectives handed down by the Southeast Jurisdiction (SEJ) UMM.

We support ten ministries within our 2025 budget and strive to have advocates from most ministries on our Cabinet. The ten ministries we support are:

1. Heart Havens
2. All God's Children Camp
3. Scouting
4. Camp Rainbow
5. Society of St. Andrew's
6. Grace Inside
7. Black Methodists for Church Renewal
8. Asian American Ministries Association
9. Native American Caucus
10. Latino/Hispanic Caucus

To help fund these ministries, a \$10 Campaign is in place. Each man in the Virginia Conference is asked to donate \$10 per man per year to support these ministries. Donations can either be made by check or through our electronic giving option. A UMM Give Day is set for Tuesday, June 17, 2025.

Donations: UMM Support | VAUMC

The VAC UMM seeks for each district within the VA Conference to have a Point of Contact. Their role is to promote Objectives and Goals within their district and promote VAC UMM events and ministries. A contact person is needed for the:

- Northern Virginia District
- Mountain View District
- Coastal Virginia District
- Living Waters District
- Shenandoah River District
- Valley Ridge District

We gratefully have Points of Contact for the Mission Rivers District and the Three Notch'd District.

The VAC UMM sends out The Beacon, our quarterly newsletter. To keep communication going in-between editions, we submit periodic events and announcements to be included in The Advocate and VA Conference UMC emails. The Beacon Signup: Subscriptions | VAUMC

The VAC UMM support Knees@Noon: a prayer initiative where men stop and pray each day at noon. Then, each Friday at noon, we have a Zoom prayer meeting, "15 minutes max." We pray for Bishop Sue and her Cabinet, for District Superintendents and Clergy, and for personal joys and concerns. Men and women are welcome to join us any Friday! The Zoom link is: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82873870973?pwd=AcGMK2suuFPnmugJl7F7cba4LKeQTQ.1>

The General Commission on United Methodist Men (GCUMM) are having the Men's and Scouting National Gathering, July 31 - August 3, 2025, at Epworth by the Sea on St. Simons Island, GA. The topic is Traveling with YOUR Why? and Tavis Tinsley, youth pastor at Central United Methodist Church in Atlanta, will be speaking. All men within the United Methodist Church and beyond are invited to attend.

Conference Registration: <https://whova.com/portal/registration/Q@cbgdUOYj4RtLfM3zWb/>

Room and Meals Registration: <https://fs21.formsite.com/Epworthssi/ukvjvkqcc8/index>

The VAC UMM are having their Annual Breakfast and Meeting at Greene Memorial UMC in Roanoke, Friday, June 13, 2025, at 7:00 AM. Rev. Jay Carey is the District Superintendent for the Living Waters District and is our speaker. We look forward to a delicious breakfast and great time of fellowship! Breakfast Registration (open through June 9, 2025): <https://signup.com/go/UaztXya>

—David J. Collins, President

OLDER ADULT COUNCIL

The Older Adult Council continues to be a vital council whose purpose is to provide a place of welcome, spiritual nurture, discipleship, and empowerment in ministry to, for, by, and with older adults. We seek to be aware of the needs of older adults in the congregations and communities of our annual conference as we continue to offer resources through the VAUMC website, through District and Conference Lay Servant training events, as well as by partnering with other ongoing ministries within the conference.

Recently we have offered our support to the Children's Ministry initiative and to the Journey to Understanding Task Group. Our goal is to become more aware of ways that older adults engage in multigenerational ministry and in ways that older adults may need information about LGBTQ+inclusion in our churches and in our communities as well as the ways older adults may be able to help enhance the journey to inclusion.

During the past year we have added to our membership by inviting persons who serve in ministry in areas that often impact older adults. We have included a hospice chaplain, a local church older adult ministry staff member and a hospital chaplain.

We also continue to support the annual event at Lake Junaluska, The Festival of Wisdom and Grace. The festival will take place on August 18-22, 2025, and will feature speakers and workshops geared to enhancing Older Adult Ministry.

The Council also seeks to be a resource to congregations and/or pastors and/or staff that may have a particular desire to offer vital older adult ministries. Our display table offers shareable resources as congregation continue seek to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. We, as Older Adults, seek to continue to be part of that mission.

—Denise M. Childers and Louise Miller, co-chairs

YOUTH COUNCIL

The Virginia UMC Conference Youth Council has flourished in its 2024/2025 season. Comprising 14 youth and 6 adults, our council has become quite the group. Our biggest achievement this season was holding our first Conference-wide youth retreat since 2019. While the Youth Council existed on paper during COVID, it had not met in person since before the pandemic.

The Youth Council Youth Service Fund Team awarded 4 YSF Grants, a total of \$6,400, for various ministries across the conference that will engage youth in service. YSF applications will open back up in January 2026.

Looking back on our retreat, it's clear that this was something special. Every youth and adult in attendance engaged in a leadership track which gave them the tools to dive deeper into their gifts and interests in ministry. The goal of the leadership tracks was for every participant to leave the retreat feeling equipped and empowered to lead in their local community and congregation. Worship and Leadership Track labs truly made an impact on the youth, creating moments of reflection, growth, and connection. Seeing so many churches come together, not just to attend but to genuinely engage with one another, was a reminder of why we do this. Fellowship wasn't just a word—it was happening in real time, across different communities, and that's something to celebrate.

From start to finish, the retreat ran smoothly, with a real sense of unity among both the youth council and those attending. The way leadership and participation intertwined showed just how much this generation is capable of stepping up and supporting each other. Even the adults took notice, with most of their feedback centering on how powerful the worship service was—a great sign that what we're building here matters.

The next conference-wide youth retreat, "Called to Be UMC," is scheduled for November 14-16, 2025 at Rappahannock Camp and Retreat Center. The 2026 retreat is scheduled for November 13-15, 2026 and the 2027 retreat is scheduled for November 12-14, 2027.

Other events to be aware of are the Global Young People's Convocation (7/7/26-7/11/26) and the YOUTH27 national event (7/11/27-7/14/27). The Youth Council hopes to be able to support youth that are interested in these denominational events.

—Jesse Burdette, Conference Youth Council Member

COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES

The Commission on Disabilities advocates for the church’s responsibility to be in ministry with and alongside all persons, regardless of physical, sensory, intellectual, neurological, or mental health conditions. Our newly revised social principles acknowledge and express regret for the church’s historical complicity in the stigmatization and discrimination against people with disabilities. This legacy has manifested itself in many forms, ranging from harmful theological interpretations of the scriptures to the imposition of negative labels, excluding individuals from church life, and misinterpreting terms such as “blind,” “lame,” and “deaf” in derogatory ways. Consequently, individuals with disabilities and their gifts for ministry have often been dismissed or undervalued within the church.

Part of the challenge lies with the term “disability.” Disabilities manifest in many forms, many of which are not immediately apparent. Countless individuals live with invisible or poorly understood conditions.

Our call as the United Methodists is to foster a culture of access and inclusion where our differences are not just tolerated but valued. As Disability Awareness Sunday approaches on July 27th, the prayer of the Commission on Disabilities is that each congregation within our conference takes this opportunity to celebrate the joy, resilience, and giftedness of people with disabilities in our midst. May this be a time not only for learning, but for honoring the ways disability ministry enriches the church’s life and calls us all to a fuller vision of beloved community.

– Timothy Joseph Barth, Chair

THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS AND ROLE OF WOMEN (COSROW)

The Commission on the Status and Role of Women (COSROW) remains steadfast in our commitment to advocacy for all women in the Church, clergy and lay, at every level. As we continue this vital work, we recognize that gender justice cannot be separated from the wider call to embrace diversity, practice equity, and cultivate truly inclusive communities.

We urge clergy and lay leadership in each local church to reflect intentionally on the diversity of their congregations. Who is present (and who is missing) from leadership roles such as Church Council, Finance, Trustees, Lay Leadership Development, and SPRC? Are women, especially those from underrepresented racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds, being empowered and invited into these spaces?

In worship and service, are women represented equitably as scripture readers, ushers, counters, and greeters? Are we using small group and Bible study materials written by women, particularly women of color, LGBTQ+ women, and women with disabilities? (For suggested resources, visit our booth in the display area!) For our male colleagues: have you considered the impact of inviting female clergy or lay servants (especially those from diverse backgrounds) to preach and lead in your churches? As we continue to cultivate a culture of calling, representation matters.

COSROW also encourages awareness around language and representation, both at Annual Conference and in the local church. Language shapes our theology, our imagination, and our systems. We continue to lift up the work of one of our own, Allison Hickey, who has developed an incredible Doctor of Ministry project focused on inclusive language and best practices. We invite you to explore this important work at our display area and join us in shaping a more inclusive and just church.

We continue to affirm and support the work of the Annual Conference in addressing places of disparity, including the work of the Just Compensation Task Force. This is a meaningful step toward economic justice and equitable treatment across gender and race.

For individuals or local churches seeking further resources or best practices for building equity and inclusion into the life of the Church, we invite you to visit our website (vaumc.org/COSROW) or connect with us on Facebook (search for ‘Commission on the Status and Role of Women – VA United Methodist Conference’). COSROW is also honored to be a resource to any woman in the annual conference in need of support – contact our co-chairs, Rev. Jenny Day (JennyDay@vaumc.org) or Rev. Lauren Wright (LaurenWright@vaumc.org) if you are in need.

– Jenny Day & Lauren Wright, Co-Chairs

CONFERENCE COMMISSION ON RELIGION AND RACE REPORT

Members: Judy Diggs, David Jimenez, Sara Keeling, Minoo Kim, Hungsu Lim, Victor Neal, James Page (Chair of ELCC), Mansoor Yagoub

The Conference Commission on Religion and Race (CCORR) was reinstated during the 2024 Annual Conference, in accordance with the current *Book of Discipline*. Since then, CCORR has realigned its mission with that of the General Commission on Religion and Race: to challenge, lead, and equip the Virginia Conference to become interculturally competent, ensure institutional equity, and facilitate vital conversations around religion, race, and culture. As part of this work, CCORR has reviewed past initiatives related to equity, including efforts focused on cultural understanding and intercultural competency.

CCORR has established a collaborative partnership with the Conference Commission on Ethnic Local Church Concerns (formerly the Commission on Ethnic Minority Concerns and Advocacy). Both commissions have designated 2025–2026 as a transitional period dedicated to discerning optimal organizational structures, defining shared strategic goals, and identifying areas for joint ministry. This year, CCORR played a supportive role in the establishment and recruitment of the Director of Belonging and Advocacy. The commission looks forward to working closely with this new staff member, who will bring valuable expertise and resources to advance the Conference’s work on religion, race, and culture.

CCORR has also been actively developing relationships with the General Commission on Religion and Race (GCORR) and other connectional partners involved in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives. In April, representatives from CCORR and ELCC attended GCORR’s Train-the-Trainer Immigration Summit and plan to facilitate learning opportunities in the near future.

In its advocacy efforts, CCORR has addressed urgent immigration and visa-related issues facing clergy, while also raising awareness within the Conference about the gifts of immigrant clergy.

CCORR celebrates and affirms the diverse gifts these clergy bring to enrich the life and mission of the Church. As part of its ongoing commitment to growth and justice, CCORR engaged in a Lenten study centered on reconciliation principles and practices.

Finally, CCORR remains committed to creating safe spaces for conversations around religion and race. We invite you to share your stories and experiences as we journey together toward a more equitable and inclusive Conference—where all are truly welcomed, valued, and empowered.

—Written by Hungsu Lim, Chair

SOCIETY OF ST. ANDREW

Over the last 45 years, the Virginia Conference has been an important partner in the work of the Society of St. Andrew. 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 2024, the Society of St. Andrew shared its one billionth pound of food, and marked this milestone with a “Thanks a Billion” celebration, honoring all who have been part of this ministry.

In 2024, 138 Virginia congregations provided financial support to the Society of St. Andrew. 20 congregations and more than 1,100 Virginia United Methodists took part in crop drops or field gleaning.

Through the Virginia Gleaning Network, the Potato & Produce Project, 294 feeding agencies (soup kitchens, shelters, emergency food assistance programs, food pantries, and large food banks), including 13 at United Methodist Churches across the state received more than two million pounds of nourishing food to share with their clients—providing 8.25 million servings of health and hope to our hungry brothers and sisters. The Seed Project (a “hand up” endeavor that provides seed potatoes and vegetable seeds to poor, land-owning Appalachian families) shared an additional 3 million

servings of good food with hungry Virginians. All this is work made possible because you care.

Nationwide, 21.7 million pounds of food (86.8 million servings) reached millions of hungry Americans in 2024 through the work of the Society of St. Andrew, through crops donated by 794 farmers/producers and through the gleaning and volunteer efforts of 22,170 individuals. The Board of Directors is actively working to build the capacity in both funding and partnerships with farmers and feeding agencies to expand SoSA's work 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 the Society of St. Andrew through its spiritual life programs, including seasonal devotional materials, Vacation Bible School curriculum, and Bible studies. In 2022, 20 Virginia congregations participated in SoSA's "Abundance Orchard" VBS; 255 congregations used SoSA's Advent devotional resources, and 267 congregations utilized SoSA's Lenten devotions.

SoSA's longstanding Harvest of Hope mission workcamp program welcomed 114 participants to events at Occohanock on the Bay and Lynchburg, VA, where 38,968 pounds of vegetables were gleaned for hungry Virginians. Christ UMC Chincoteague, Franktown UMC, Grace UMC Parksley, Epworth UMC Exmore provided meals to Harvest of Hope participants, and Chester UMC, Bridgewater UMC, Providence UMC, Burke UMC, Korean UMC McLean, Korean UMC of Koinania, Rocky Mount UMC sent participants to 2024 Harvest of Hope events.

The Society of St. Andrew'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." With approval from the Annual Conference, the board nominates Sloan Lott, Steve Moore, and Houston Hemp to the Class of 2028.

—Lynette Johnson

THE CHILDREN AND FAMILY MINISTRY COUNCIL

After discerning the need to more fully equip, empower, and resource ministry leaders related to children and family ministries, the Children & Family Ministry Council was formed in the fall of 2024. The council began its work in early 2025 by collaborating with a ministry coach to discern the vision of the council and its immediate and long-term goals. This work of discernment is continuing as the council narrows down its scope of ways to support the ministry of local churches and leaders.

The Children & Family Ministry Council has discerned the following areas of focus: curriculum resources, volunteer training materials and workshops, recruitment strategies and templates, parent and caregiver resources, inter-church partnerships, coaching and mentorship programs, and ministry sustainability.

—Reneé Delgado, Children & Family Ministry Council Member

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THE CONFERENCE NOMINATIONS TEAM

Chair:

Martha Stokes, Conference Lay Leader

Conference Leadership:

Dwayne Stinson, Director of Discipleship and Congregational Vitality
Jonathan Page, Director of Connection and Innovation

Monitors:

James Page, CELLC (Committee on Ethnic Local Church Concerns (formerly CEMCA))
Karen Robison, Commission on Disabilities
Lauren Wright, COSROW

District Representatives:

Albert Weal, Coastal Virginia District
VACANT, Living Waters District
Angie Hoen, Mission Rivers District
Bonnie-Karen Byrne, Mountain View District
Tarah Lee, Northern Virginia District
Jessica Jarrell, Shenandoah River District
Scotty Doyle, Three Notch'd District
Jonathan Greer, Valley Ridge District
Doris Douglas, At Large

The goal of the Conference Nominations Team is to carefully discern over individuals who can provide leadership and diverse skills to our boards. While discerning, the Conference Nominations Team must consider the needs of the boards to ensure that boards are properly filled, and representation is taken into consideration. This year, the Nominations Team has lifted up the following names for approval from the Annual Conference.

Church Development Team

Stephen Poore
Bayo Ogungbade
Kameron Wilds
Audrey Smith

Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministries

Janet Henke

Missional Ministries Board

Ann Klotz

Board of Communications

Hung Su Lim
Brian Bachrach
Devon Earle
Bill McClung - Re-elect

Commission on Disabilities

Esther Agbosu
Gretchen Ward
Jair Serrano
Steven Greer

Council on Finance and Administration

Kelly Weiss

Committee on Rules

Tim Hazlett
Carlos Liceaga

Conference Trustees

JP Hong

Commission on Religion and Race

Anjana DePrewitt
Heather Gomez
Talina Beck
Lynda Moore
Heather Wray

VAUMC Foundation Board

Adam Greene
Angeline Hoen

BOARD OF ORDAINED MINISTRY

The work of the Board of Ordained Ministry (BOM) is guided by our three core values:

- 1. The Holy Spirit is at work in our practice of discernment**
- 2. The Whole Person is considered in our work with the candidates and clergy**
- 3. In A Rapidly Changing World, effective ministry leadership is needed in the pulpit and far beyond it.**

In July, the Center for Clergy Excellence welcomed Rev. Dr. Jason Stanley as the Director for Call and Candidacy. Under his leadership, the BOM held a training for all District Committees on Ordained Ministry and the first Discernment Day to engage a culture of call for lay and clergy ministry in the Annual Conference. In August, Officers of BOM traveled to Atlanta for training with other BOM leaders from across the denomination. The BOM Ethics Committee updated its Social Media Policy for Clergy, and the Conference staff developed a Social Media Policy for local churches and Preschools.

The Spiritual Vitality Committee worked with Bishop Sue Hauptert-Johnson in offering two Clergy Days Apart, one in the fall and one in the spring. BOM continues to offer scholarships for those seeking ordination as deacon or elder in the conference as well as for Course of Study and Continuing Education opportunities. New this year, Clergy Development Funds are available to support work with a certified spiritual director or coach.

This quadrennium, BOM downsized from 60 members to 40 members. After revising the Associate Membership process, BOM is excited to welcome two new Associate members at this annual conference. BOM continues to offer Simple Presence, a 20-minute contemplative prayer experience on Zoom at 6 am Monday through Friday, where the VA Conference, laity, clergy, cabinet, and staff are prayed over. Laity and clergy are welcome to join us.

BOM often receives questions from conference members regarding the process for credentialing clergy. This process is spelled out by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry and *The 2020/2024 United Methodist Book of Discipline*. BOM's task is not to vet candidates but to discern if their Divine calling is to ministry in The United Methodist Church. This process is not an easy one for two reasons: pastors are entrusted with people's lives at their most vulnerable moments and are ordained for lifelong service in the church, just as a professor is tenured. BOM members take their responsibility of credentialing as a holy privilege and calling as they serve you, the VA Conference, with prayer, faithfulness, and amazing grace. BOM continues to be amazed at the way God works in and through all involved in this credentialing process, and we give God all the glory.

We offer thanks for the hard work of the 8 dCOM members, BOM members, and the Center for Clergy Excellence, which supports and undergirds all our work. Thank you to Rev. Jessie S. Colwell, Rev. Dr. Jason Stanley, and Rev. Lyn Harding.

– Rev. Tammy L. Estep, Chair

Members of the Board of Ordained Ministry

3rd Quadrennium

David Bonney
Alan Combs
Blair Ellis (lay)
Tammy L. Estep
Stan Hargraves
Marilyn Heckstall
Shawn Kiger (lay)
Mikang Kim
Sarah Dumas Locke
Lynda Moore
Leigh Anne Taylor
David Vaughan
Neal Wise

2nd Quadrennium

Esther Agbosu
Tracy Bass
Adam Blagg
Brian Brown
Debbie Cali (lay)
David Edinger (AM)
Amy Grant
Grace Sun-khil Han
Teer Hardy
Chad Herndon
Janine Howard
Keon Huh
Seungsoo “RJ” Jun
Michelle Kim
Lauren Leggett (lay)
Cynthia Lopynski (lay)
Craig Newman
Camille Pentsil
Nancy Robinson
Patty Slattum (lay)
Bill Slingerland (lay)
Jae Song
Laura Stratton
George M. Warner, Sr.
Sarah Wastella
Heather Wray

1st Quadrennium

Lisa McGehee
Ryan LaRock
Nathan Decker
Morris Fleischer

COMMITTEE ON EPISCOPACY

The Committee on Episcopacy (COE) is responsible for the review and evaluation of the resident bishop as required by the *2020/2024 Book of Discipline* paragraph 636. A process for this review has been created and is used by all Conference COE's in the Southeastern Jurisdiction (SEJ). The Virginia Conference COE has met with Bishop Sue Hauptert-Johnson three times this year to engage in conversation around this process and discuss matters present in the Virginia Annual Conference and larger connection. The COE communicates parts of the results and insights of this review with the SEJ COE for use in their assignment process for 2025 - 2027.

The COE is focused on how we, with Bishop Sue and the Annual Conference move forward re imagining connectivity with clergy and laity together. We need to trust the Holy Spirit as we find new ways of doing church.

The Virginia COE is pleased with Bishop Sue's leadership and forward thinking and we are looking forward to another fruitful year of ministry and mission here in Virginia with Bishop Sue Hauptert-Johnson.

– *Rev. Lindsey Baynham Freeman & Mr. Warren R. Harper, Chairs*

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

During this past Conference year, The Board of Trustees undertook an initiative to centralize the management of properties in which the Conference has an interest. As a result, titles to closed churches and certain other properties that were held by old District entities, or in some cases still titled in the name of the trustees of the closed church, have been transferred to the Conference Trustees. Since the start of this initiative, and as of the end of April 2025:

- v Thirty-four properties have been transferred, valued at \$27,871,226.
- v Ten properties have been sold to third parties, generating proceeds of \$1,174,000.
- v As of the date of this report, we still have 33 additional properties that are in the queue to be transferred to the Trustees, having a total assessed value of \$22,884,260.00. Of these properties, 9 (having a total assessed value of \$12,436,320.00) are in the later stages of transfer to the Trustees.

We anticipate that by the date of Annual Conference most of these remaining properties will be transferred.

Each property that is received by the Board of Trustees is inspected and research is done to determine the value of the property and the market conditions in the surrounding area. Some of these properties have the potential to provide the Annual Conference with significant revenue streams. In those cases, we take full advantage of those opportunities. If a property does not have the opportunity to provide substantial income but may be able to address mission and ministry needs within the community, the Trustees will work closely with the Property Advisory Team (PAT) headed up by Rev. Amanda Garber, Director of Missional and Community Engagement. The PAT group will provide the Trustees with critical insights about missional opportunities for these properties.

If it is found that these properties have neither revenue producing potential nor mission/ministry uses, the Board of Trustees will then work with Wesley Community Development to sell these properties to third parties.

All proceeds from either revenue producing properties or the sale of properties will be managed by CFA. CFA has developed a policy of 80% of this income going toward building the Conference reserves and reducing the apportionment burden on our local churches. The remaining 20% will go toward providing grants to groups within the Annual Conference to develop missions and ministries throughout the Conference.

Given the substantial increase in real estate transactions, the Trustees now conduct monthly meetings, in addition to certain specially called meetings to deal with more urgent matters. Previously, we scheduled only two meetings per year. With the real estate services of Wesley CDC, the law firm of Williams Mullen, and new Trustees who add significantly to our real estate expertise and much more frequent meetings, we believe the Board of Trustees is equipped to manage its increased workload in a professional and efficient manner. The Board of Trustees takes very seriously our responsibility to be good stewards of the resources with which we have been blessed.

UNITED METHODIST-RELATED SCHOOLS

Ferrum College

Ferrum College was founded over 112 years ago by the Women’s Home Mission Society of the Virginia Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church in rural Franklin County, nestled in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The College prides itself on fostering personalized learning and close student-faculty relationships, providing an optimal environment for students to engage deeply with their studies and community.

The College offers a variety of undergraduate degrees in liberal arts and sciences, as well as select advanced degrees, and certifications in Career and Technical Education (CTE). Guided by its motto of “Not Self, But Others,” Ferrum College provides accessible and transformative educational opportunities to students who “enter with promise and leave with purpose.” Among our students, 62% are male, 86% are Pell Grant eligible, 98% receive tuition assistance, 34% are minority students, and 48% are the first in their families to pursue higher education.

Demonstrating its continued commitment to innovation, in February 2025, the College received approval for provisional membership in NCAA Division II, making Ferrum College the only institution to undergo an expedited membership process that typically spans multiple years. This achievement allows Ferrum College’s student-athletes to receive athletic scholarships, marking a new chapter for the College’s athletics program starting in fall 2025. As part of this transition, the Panthers will join Conference Carolinas, whose philosophy: “Champions in Body, Mind, and Soul,” promotes academic achievement and spiritual growth as well as athleticism, bolstering the College’s commitment to providing balanced, holistic opportunities for all students.

Ferrum College is also home to the only private liberal arts program in Virginia offering a four-year degree in Agricultural Sciences and teaching licensure in vocational agriculture. The College’s working farm, which includes livestock, allows students to gain hands-on experience that is invaluable for those pursuing veterinary or other advanced degree programs. Our agricultural programs in crop science, horticulture, and animal science, as well as our long-standing water quality monitoring project on Smith Mountain Lake, provide students with practical, real-world experiences that set them apart in their careers.

Among Ferrum College’s proudest achievements are its unique, comprehensive offerings for students. Our Crime Scene House and Wet Cadaver Lab give criminal justice and biology students direct access to industry-level training, preparing them for careers in forensic science and healthcare. Additionally, Ferrum College’s Environmental Science and Sustainability Programs, the second the oldest in the country, provide students with extensive hands-on research opportunities.

In addition to academic excellence, Ferrum College takes great pride in its commitment to mental health and wellness. As a JED Campus, Ferrum College offers a robust set of mental health resources, including counseling and student engagement programs, to help students build resilience and thrive academically and personally. Our innovative nursing program also admits students directly into the program, eliminating the stress of reapplication and offering supportive pathways to degree completion.

Ferrum College’s academic programs are complemented by a thriving arts and culture scene, with our Orchestra Appalachia and Bluegrass Brass Band offering students unique opportunities to engage with the arts and music of the region. These programs are part of Ferrum College’s broader commitment to preserving the Blue Ridge region’s heritage, particularly through the Blue Ridge Institute and Museum, which houses the Virginia State Center for Blue Ridge Folklore and hosts the annual Blue Ridge Folklife Festival during the fourth weekend in October.

The College remains an economic, cultural, and academic pillar in the Franklin County community, providing essential educational opportunities for the next generation of leaders. Through initiatives like the Panther Promise, which offers free tuition to Virginia residents from households with less than \$65,000 income, and our Earn-to-Learn Matched Savings Scholarship, Ferrum College continues to expand access to higher education for students who might otherwise face financial barriers.

As Ferrum College moves into a new era of NCAA Division II athletics and continues to expand its unique, hands-on academic offerings, the College remains steadfast in its mission to serve not just the students it educates, but the broader community it enriches. The College's commitment to providing a well-rounded education grounded in faith that balances academic rigor, community service, and personal development will remain its guiding principle for years to come.

Mirta M. Martin, Ph.D., President

Randolph-Macon Academy

Randolph-Macon Academy holds the unique status of being the only United Methodist affiliated secondary school in the Virginia Conference. Consistent with our 133 years of commitment to developing young people in mind, body, and spirit to lead and positively impact the world they inhabit, R-MA continues to evolve and adapt for modern world realities while standing on the unchanging foundation of God and holding fast to our covenant with the United Methodist Church.

In a boarding school environment, we are uniquely equipped to share all aspects of life together, including academic and spiritual formation, intergenerational relationships, sports, clubs, meals, prayers, worship, community, and fellowship.

This year, 275 students plus 60 faculty and staff attended chapel service every week. Scripture reading, proclamation, song, prayer, and sacraments are part of the regular formative practices. 35-40 students voluntarily lead and/or attend weekly Bible study. 45 students are enrolled in World Religions class. 25 students and adults participated in a retreat and service project at Camp Highroads that has resulted in deepening relationships.

In the interfaith arena, 15 Muslim students were actively supported and accommodated during the holy month of Ramadan. Muslim students also participated in weekly Isha prayers and helped educate non-Muslim students about their faith practices. Approximately 5% of R-MA's student body is Jewish, Buddhist, or Hindu. The community held educational and ceremonial events for Diwali, Holi, and Bodhi Day. Our Jewish students observe Yom Kipur and Passover with a local Jewish congregation, and also educate non-Jewish students on other holy days, observances, and faith practices during our weekly chapel services. Participating in interfaith dialogue is a regular part of campus life.

Academically, 100% of our students were accepted into college or university, to include 14 appointments to military academies. Our students are globally, racially, socioeconomically, ethnically, and religiously diverse, representing 18 countries and every major world religion. Academic and spiritual formation, along with character and leadership development are embedded into the fabric of R-MA. Similar to our United Methodist roots, we understand that formation must always be intentional, relational, and immersive. As such, we create structures and rhythms to ensure that happens. We believe the United Methodist Church should enhance its support for mission and ministry at R-MA, as R-MA commits fully to our covenant, discipleship, academic excellence, and fruitful ministry.

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

Randolph-Macon College

In our 195th year, Randolph-Macon College in Ashland, Virginia, just north of Richmond, remains steadfastly committed to a mission of “developing the minds and character of each student,” with rigorous academics, opportunities for learning beyond the classroom, and advantaged by an exceptional faculty and staff.

The College welcomed our largest freshman class ever last fall. The 2024-25 academic year opened with nearly 1650 undergraduates and 44 graduate students, also an RMC record. About 80% of RMC students live on-campus, and we maintain a student-faculty ratio of just over 10 to 1 with an average class size of 16 students. This scale affords our students remarkable personal attention, paired with an intentional career pathways program. RMC has earned a strong reputation for excellent career preparation, including a national top 20 ranking for career services by the Princeton Review for four years in a row.

The year has been a busy one, including RMC's search for our 16th president, who will succeed me after my retirement this summer. We are pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Michael Hill, who will join RMC after he concludes his service as President of the Chautauqua Institution, the amazing community/organization in western New York that cele-

brates, encourages and studies the arts and humanities, treating them as integral to all of learning. A haven for learning, reflection, and connection, its offerings include a wide variety of services of worship and programs that express Chautauqua's Christian heritage as well as its interfaith commitment. Of interest, Chautauqua too has Methodist roots as a one-time teaching camp for Sunday School teachers. Dr. Hill brings to RMC a wealth of non-profit experience both inside and outside higher education.

In anticipation of leadership change, the College engaged in two important planning efforts this year focused on our future. One is an agile strategic plan, which aims to help strengthen our historic focus on the post-graduate outcomes of our students. Several programs are in development as part of that effort, including a new major in data science which was announced this winter. We are completing a refresh of our 2009 Campus Master Plan, which outlines our vision for our campus buildings and facilities. The latter effort is especially significant given our significant increase in enrollment.

We certainly value our relationship with the Virginia UMC and demonstrate this commitment in many ways: Foremost is our pre-ministerial program, anchored by our generous A. Purnell Bailey Scholarships for those students discerning a call to Christian ministry. We are also honored to be home to a significant part of the Va UMC Conference Archives in our library. Indeed, we invite interested parties to visit these Archives and discover many amazing historical pieces. We also value two special programs for high school students that continued during the summer of 2024: Convergence: A Youth Theology Institute on Faith and Science and Pathways to Science. Convergence helps teens explore how Christian faith and the sciences can inform and inspire one another while Pathways provides opportunities for rising sophomore Hispanic girls to meet scientists and explore STEM related activities.

Duncan Memorial UMC is located immediately adjacent to our campus and serves as our College Chapel. Duncan offers a number of worship, service, and leadership opportunities to our campus. The Church hosts the weekly RMC Student Fellowship, visits our college cafeteria following worship once a month, and invites students to join in opportunities such as the twice weekly Child Watch for adult English classes, service projects at Westview on the James, Rise Against Hunger, and more. A dedicated group of RMC students and DMUMC members also regularly visit the local nursing homes monthly to lead Bingo Games and social time together. We also visited on Christmas Morning to walk the halls and sing Christmas Carols. Duncan Memorial has also re-started their Duncan Buddies program which matches RMC students to individuals/families in the church for monthly activities and a supportive relationship.

As the oldest continuously operating Methodist college in America, Randolph-Macon College greatly appreciates our historic and ongoing relationship to the Virginia Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church and the mutual resources and support that we offer one another. Moreover, this important relationship has been of significant value to me in my RMC presidency, a position I have been deeply honored to hold for 19 and ½ years.

– Robert Lindgren, President

Trustees of Randolph-Macon College, Ashland, VA

As of May 1, 2024

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William B. Kilduff, Esq., Richmond, VA
Sabra L. Klein, Ph.D., Washington, DC
Robert B. Lambeth, Jr., Forrest, VA
Robert R. Lindgren, Esq., Ashland, VA
Stephen P. Long, M.D., Richmond, VA
David G. Meleski, Manakin Sabot, VA
Thornton C. Melton, III, Richmond, VA
Thomas L. Millner, Monticello, GA
R. Geoffrey Neville, Jr., Atlanta, GA
Allison M. O'Brien, Richmond, VA
Annette C. Paul, Ashland, VA
John B. Peters, Charlottesville, VA
Susan P. Quinn, Richmond, VA
Graham B. Rashkind, Richmond, VA
Mary Lynn Reed, Washington, DC
Louis E. Renjel, Jr., Washington, DC
Michael R. Roberson, Richmond, VA
Susan D. Schick, Marion Station, PA
J. Edward Spence, Chapel Hill, NC*
Linwood A. Staub, Doylestown, PA
Cindy Szadokierski, Southport, NC
R. Randolph Weis, Henrico, VA
R. Douglas White, Richmond, VA
Katherine G. Whitehead, Richmond, VA

**New board members-need to be confirmed at Annual Conference*

Shenandoah University

Shenandoah University is celebrating its SESQUICENTENNIAL, and we are larger and stronger than ever! After 150 years of impact, our mission at Shenandoah remains steadfast: “Shenandoah University educates and inspires individuals to be critical, reflective thinkers; lifelong learners; and ethical, compassionate citizens who are committed to making responsible contributions within a community, a nation and the world.”

Our budget and enrollment continue to be strong and growing amid the shifting financial and political landscape. In 2024, Shenandoah welcomed its largest freshman class and its largest entering class of graduate students ever. As well, this year SU received its largest and second largest gifts ever (\$20million and \$10million); we are so grateful for the support for our students and our mission!

At SU, we take pride in our alumni who run local non-profit organizations that serve people experiencing poverty and housing insecurity; perform regionally and nationally on Broadway and at other venues; and serve as bankers, pharmacists, clergy, nurses, teachers, therapists, information technology specialists, cybersecurity analysts, and all manner of professionals across our world - many of whom are also caring for their children, parents and community. Shenandoah's six schools, in a distinct variety of fields, continue to equip our students to meet the needs of today while empowering them to shape the

future. Our newest programs are an undergraduate Engineering major and two master's programs: one in Speech Language Pathology and the other in Clinical Mental Health Counseling.

The Hub for Innovators, Veterans, and Entrepreneurs (HIVE) has transformed Winchester's historic Hazel-Pruitt Armory into a cutting-edge technology hub and innovation accelerator for tech startups, business expansion, and relocation. It aims to drive economic development in the Northern Shenandoah Valley, supply a well-trained workforce, and establish the region as a leading center for emerging technologies like augmented and virtual reality. When exploring the halls and rooms of the HIVE, expect to encounter students who have served our country in the armed forces alongside those whose adult lives are only beginning to take shape. The HIVE provides an exciting atmosphere in which all work together to create a brighter future for people near and far.

Shenandoah's unique Global Citizenship Project (GCP) is 20 years old this year! Thanks to a special bequest from Dr. Nancy Larrick Crosby, this program was created to remove the top three barriers to international travel: financial resources, time off to travel, and anxiety over leaving the country. GCP has sent hundreds of students, staff, faculty, and trustees to destinations on six continents to create relationships across difference while learning about the local culture. We are honored to hear all of the stories of our travelers, especially those whose financial situations would have prevented them from such adventures as those facilitated by GCP.

The Center for Civic Engagement (CCE) registered 167 people, mostly students, to vote ahead of the 2024 election. CCE then provided transportation for 65 to vote on Election Day. In cooperation with the Office of Spiritual Life, supported by other campus offices and Professor Emeritus, Rev. Dr. John Copenhaver, a group of students attended the Virginia Inter-faith Center for Public Policy's Student Advocacy Day in Richmond. They spoke with legislators and attended information sessions about issues facing Virginians while learning about the legislative process and their places within it. The Office of Spiritual Life is launching a monthly evening Christian worship service in addition to its myriad opportunities for spiritual growth and connection among those of varying backgrounds.

I remain grateful for the support and prayers for Shenandoah University from the Virginia Annual Conference, along with its districts and congregations. We are the "Big Little University Rising," with a passion for education and service rooted in our shared Wesleyan heritage. It's a great day to be a Hornet!

—Tracy Fitzsimmons, President

Virginia Wesleyan University

VWU continues to garner national recognition as one of the most innovative National Liberal Arts Colleges in the country. As a proud member of the highly selective New American Colleges and Universities (NACU) collaborative, VWU participates in initiatives such as the Washington Internship Institute, providing students with exceptional experiential learning opportunities in the nation's capital. In 2024, total enrollment across all programs and locations—from Virginia Beach to Tokyo, Japan—reached 5,075 learners, including 1,674 students on the traditional Virginia Beach campus. Despite national trends of declining enrollments and rising higher education costs, Virginia Wesleyan's resilience remains unwavering, reaching more students than ever before through a combination of traditional, non-traditional, and international programs. Affordability remains a top priority, with the University's multi-faceted approach including multiple years of frozen tuition costs, expanded donor-funded Work & Learn opportunities, a fifth-year tuition guarantee, and new concurrent enrollment programs with Virginia's community colleges. Under the leadership of President Scott D. Miller, one of the nation's longest-serving college presidents, Virginia Wesleyan has continued to demonstrate remarkable creativity and growth despite regional and demographic challenges.

Virginia Wesleyan's national reputation for excellence was reaffirmed this year with multiple accolades. VWU has been designated as a national liberal arts college and a "Higher Access" institution, honoring our commitment to student success, access, and opportunity in the Carnegie Classification. The University again earned the prestigious Tree Campus Higher Education recognition from the Arbor Day Foundation and was named one of the Top Green Colleges by *The Princeton Review*. *Washington Monthly* ranked VWU among the top liberal arts colleges in the nation, recognizing its contributions to the public good, Pell Grant performance, and service commitment. VWU was also included in *The Princeton Review's* Best 389 Colleges list and *U.S. News & World Report's* rankings of Top National Liberal Arts Colleges. Additionally, Virginia Wesleyan was designated a Voter Friendly Campus for 2025–26, further affirming its commitment to civic engagement and student

leadership.

Innovation in academic programming continues to distinguish Virginia Wesleyan. The University has launched major new initiatives including The Athenaeum in the H.C. Hofheimer II Library, a reimagined academic hub set to open summer 2025, and the Jane P. Batten and David R. Black School for International Studies, a partnership with Lakeland University and Lakeland University Japan offering dual degrees and globally focused leadership training. In collaboration with the Urban League of Hampton Roads, VWU established the Center for Urban Leadership Education, which houses the Incarcerated Persons ReEntry Program, aimed at reducing recidivism by providing degree-seeking opportunities for incarcerated individuals. Virginia Wesleyan has also joined the American Association of Colleges and Universities' Institute on AI, Pedagogy, and the Curriculum, positioning the University at the forefront of addressing artificial intelligence's evolving role in higher education. Expanding graduate offerings, VWU launched a fully online Master of Arts in Applied Psychology, a flexible 30-credit-hour program designed to equip students with real-world psychological insights for careers in nonprofits, corporate human resources, and government agencies.

New partnerships, such as the collaboration with Virginia Christian College to provide online general education classes, further expand VWU's impact on degree completion for a broad range of students. Virginia Wesleyan has also become a member of the Council of Independent Colleges' Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education (NetVUE), strengthening its commitment to helping students discover purposeful career pathways. The University continues to expand non-degree and professional development offerings through its Global Campus, with low- and no-cost workshops developed in partnership with Virginia Beach Economic Development. In collaboration with WHRO and the Batten Environmental Education Initiative, VWU launched *ENVS 103 Introduction to the Environment: Virginia*, an online course available at no cost for incoming first-year students. This no-cost course helps VWU fulfill its mission to foster the next generation of environmental stewards. VWU's new Navy ROTC program adds to its growing portfolio of leadership and service opportunities for students.

Campus enhancements this year include the dedication of G. Robert Aston, Jr. Hall at Chesapeake Bay Academy (CBA), further strengthening the long-standing partnership between VWU and CBA, and the naming of The Honors Village Residence Hall in honor of Anne B. Shumadine, recognizing her lasting contributions to the University. Construction is advancing on the Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art (Virginia MOCA) at Virginia Wesleyan, with completion expected by January 2026. Together with the Susan S. Goode Fine and Performing Arts Center, Susan T. Beverly Hall, and Louise Eggleston Hall, Virginia MOCA will complete the David R. Goode Arts Complex. This monumental addition further establishes Virginia Wesleyan as a cultural and educational leader in the region.

The Robert Nusbaum Center, a national niche program of VWU, continues to serve as the hub for civil dialogue, civic learning, and community engagement. Through programs designed to cultivate mutual understanding, build civic skills, and empower individuals to become agents of positive change, the Center remains vital to VWU's mission of preparing students for leadership in a complex world.

Religious life on campus is vibrant as Campus Ministries serves students of all faiths, interests, and backgrounds. VWU students, faculty, and staff are active members both on campus and at our partner congregation, Haygood United Methodist Church. The donor-funded Boyd Fellows program provides opportunities for student leaders to assist with the administrative, visionary, and programmatic aspects of religious life. Early assurance agreements with the Boston University School of Theology, Candler School of Theology at Emory University, and the Duke University Divinity School offer pathways for students pursuing careers in ministry.

—Dr. Scott D. Miller, President

SCHOOLS OF THEOLOGY

Candler School of Theology

Since 1914, Candler School of Theology at Emory University has educated faithful and creative leaders for the church's ministries throughout the world. An official seminary of The United Methodist Church, Candler holds true to the Wesleyan value of ecumenical openness, welcoming students from more than 40 denominations. Our student body reflects the diversity and breadth of the Christian faithful, with an enrollment of 416 from 13 countries, 41 states, 32 annual conferences, and 43% persons of color. We see this diversity as a blessing, enriching our life together and providing the perfect context for training for relevant ministry in the 21st century—ministry that cultivates community across difference, welcomes all to contribute and belong, and embodies Christ's love in and among us.

Candler offers six degrees (Master of Divinity, Master of Theological Studies, Master of Arts in Religion and Leadership, Master of Religion and Public Life, Master of Theology, Doctor of Ministry), most of which are available in hybrid or online formats. Response to our hybrid-format Master of Divinity, blending online classes and in-person intensives, continues to be strong: 63% of 2024's MDiv entering class chose the hybrid model. Nearly a quarter of MDiv students participate in Candler's Teaching Parish program, earning contextual education credit by serving as student pastors in local churches. And our proven DMin program—with a near 90% completion rate—is 90% online. These flexible options along with Candler's recognized academic excellence and hands-on learning opportunities are opening possibilities for more people to follow God's call to ministry.

Generous financial aid is a top priority for Candler. In 2024-2025, we are on track to award nearly \$6.5 million in scholarship support across all degree programs. All MDiv students receive scholarship support, and those who are certified candidates for ordained ministry in the UMC receive full-tuition scholarships. Plus, a remarkable gift this year of \$20 million from the O. Wayne Rollins Foundation promises to have a transformative impact on the school and future students alike, fueling a considerable expansion of our scholarship program and reducing financial barriers to high-quality theological education.

Several programs beyond our formal degrees make Candler a hub of Christian learning for an expanding audience. Those who are not seeking a graduate degree can engage in learning through The Candler Foundry, which offers in-person and online short courses, events, and certificate programs; the United Methodist Course of Study for educating licensed local pastors; the Candler Center for Christian Leadership for refining business skills of United Methodist leaders; and La Mesa Academy, offering a graduate certificate in theological studies via a two-year hybrid program with courses in Spanish, English, and Korean.

Candler continued to strengthen the already robust United Methodist presence among our faculty with four key appointments this year: Geordan Hammond, associate professor of Methodist and Wesleyan studies; Soren Hessler, assistant professor in the practice of leadership and administration; Jennifer Quigley, assistant professor of New Testament; and Bishop Hope Morgan Ward, who joined us as bishop-in-residence following the retirement of Bishop Larry Goodpaster.

Jonathan Strom became dean of Candler in August 2024, when former dean Jan Love returned to the faculty. Strom has served on Candler's faculty since 1997 as professor of church history, with nearly a decade as senior associate dean of faculty and academic affairs, and a number of years as director of international initiatives. He is committed to nurturing the school's deep connection with The United Methodist Church.

Candler is strengthened by your prayers, partnership, and support. Thank you for the countless ways you advance this vital ministry in the life of the church. We invite you to visit us online at candler.emory.edu and follow us on social media to stay informed of all we offer throughout the year.

—Office of Communications, Candler School of Theology, Emory University

Duke Divinity School

Through God's sustaining grace and faithfulness, Duke Divinity School continues to welcome students from across the nation and around the world to be trained for ministries ranging from rural church pastorates to hospital and prison chaplains to community service leaders to theological educators. In 2024, we were joined by 224 students from 41 U.S. states and the District of Columbia as well as new students who hold either primary or secondary citizenship in 11 other countries. The Master of Divinity program gained 108 new students, including 62 residential students (up from 54 the year before) and 46 in the hybrid program. The Master of Arts in Christian Practice enrolled eight new students; the Doctor of Ministry, 39 (up from 22 last year); Master of Theology, 10; Master of Theological Studies, 27; the Doctor of Theology welcomed five new students to campus. The Certificate in Theology and Health Care welcomed five residential students to campus and 21 to the hybrid program.

This has been a year of centennial celebrations for Duke University and The Duke Endowment. DDS was honored to participate in a Founders' Weekend chapel service, held in Duke Chapel, in which both United Methodist Church bishops in North Carolina (Bishop Connie Shelton and Bishop Ken Carter) participated in leading the service, along with Dean Colón-Emeric. Divinity students and alumni contributed prayers and music, and of particular note were three women in our Master of Theology program who offered prayers in Mandarin, Hindi, and Korean.

Duke Divinity School continues to invest in ways to support Methodist leadership and pastoral formation. Our D.Min. program welcomed two new cohorts, one in Traditional Leadership and one in Missional Leadership, with support from the Parish Ministry Fund and The Duke Endowment. These 39 students are strengthening their capacity for leadership, establishing new faith communities, and meeting the challenges confronting churches and communities.

Master of Divinity students in the UMC had the opportunity in the spring 2024 semester to enroll in a course designed to prepare them to be observers at the UMC General Conference. Students met weekly with DDS faculty who are ordained elders in the UMC and nearly half a dozen bishops and denominational leaders. As one student said: "It is a time when we hold fast to our convictions and identify what is unique to the United Methodist Church. What is our role, currently and in the future? It's amazing: our mission is to make disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. I am excited about my ministry journey and the future of the UMC."

Duke Divinity continues to build on our connection to Methodist churches around the world through a formal partnership with Methodist Theological University in Seoul, South Korea. This agreement, signed on Sept. 21, 2024, supports the creation of pathways for the exchange of students, faculty, and academic programming.

Two scholars joined our faculty this year: Aaron Griffith, assistant professor of American church history, and Kevin Hart, Jo Rae Wright University Distinguished Professor, with a joint appointment in the Duke University department of English. William Turner Jr., James T. and Alice Mead Cleland Professor Emeritus of the Practice of Preaching, received the Duke University Medal for Distinguished Meritorious Service, the highest honor bestowed by the university.

Duke Divinity commemorated the 50th anniversary of the Women's Center at the school with a guest preacher and celebration dinner. With a \$5 million gift from The Duke Endowment, we are strengthening our Office of Black Church Studies through recruiting a senior scholar and supporting academic, theological research. A \$1.25 million grant from Lilly Endowment Inc., part of their Nurturing Children through Worship and Prayer Initiative, will help launch a Duke Divinity program, "Let the Children Come," to study how congregations more fully and intentionally engage children in intergenerational corporate worship and prayer practices.

Duke Divinity School continues to be grateful for our ongoing participation in The United Methodist Church and partnership with this annual conference. We look forward to our ongoing work with you as we join the leading of God's Spirit in the task of preparing people for Christian ministry. To learn more about Duke Divinity School, please visit our website at www.divinity.duke.edu.

– *Edgardo Colón-Emeric, Dean of Duke Divinity School*

Gammon Theological Seminary

GAMMON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY is the only Historically Black Theological Institution (HBTI) of The United Methodist Church. Gammon’s Mission is to help prepare for the practice of Christian ministry and public leadership individuals who understand their vocation as working in partnership with God in forming a just and generative world for all.

GTS is currently an “extended unit” of the Interdenominational Theological Center. As a constituent member of the ITC who is accredited through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), GTS has conferred degrees in partnership with the ITC for Gammon Theological Seminary graduates since 1959. Gammon Theological Seminary seeks separate accreditation through SACSCOC and the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada (ATS).

We are excited to share Academic and Operational updates for 2024.

- v In June 2024, we hired a world-renowned theologian and scholar, Dr. Renita J. Weems, as our Chief Academic Officer.
- v This Fall 2024, we launched state-of-the-art renovations to the Gammon building. The renovations transformed the facility into a place for four in-person class sessions, upgrading all meeting spaces with state-of-the-art technology and furnishings.
- v In September 2024, the Board of Trustees of Gammon Theological Seminary approved the submission of our application to begin the SACSCOC Accreditation process. This historic decision included Gammon launching our Independent MDIV degree program in September 2024.

Here are a few of this year’s ministry and fund development highlights.

- v In Spring 2024, Gammon hosted our 2nd Annual Student Scholarship Fundraiser Golf Tournament, which received \$70,000 in donations toward the scholarship fund.
- v The Rev. Walter H. McKelvey Endowed Scholarship The fund, which was launched by Dr. Loretta F. McKelvey (wife of the late Rev. McKelvey) and Dr. Walter Kimbrough, continues to grow with matching gifts in partnership with the South Carolina United Methodist Foundation.
- v In June 2024, the Florida Conference’s Rev. Geraldine McClellan Endowed Scholarship Fund, which is now fully endowed at the Florida United Methodist Foundation, continued to grow with donations for 2024. Now, the fund balance exceeds \$130,000.00, and Dr. Geraldine McClellan was honored at our 2024 Founder’s Day/Pastors and Leaders Conference Gala banquet with our Icon of Excellence Award.
- v Gammon hosted the Ebony Exploration Event for 75 young adults under the age of 35. The students explored their sense of call and vocational discernment.
- v In December 2024, Gammon celebrated our 141st Founder’s Day and Pastors and Leaders Conference. We hosted over three hundred people attending workshops (in person and virtual) and our Scholarship Gala Dinner at IMPACT Church in Atlanta, GA.
- v Gammon received two \$10,000 donations for two new endowed funds from Dr. James H. Salley, in honor of his parents in the South Carolina Conference, and from Rev. Dr. Michael McQueen, District Superintendent for the North Georgia Central North District.

—Dr. Candace M. Lewis, President | CEO

Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary

Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary continues to live into its mission of *Forming courageous leaders in the way of Jesus to cultivate communities of justice, compassion, and hope...for the thriving of the Church and the healing of the world.* We do this work in partnership with the annual conferences of the United Methodist Church and other partners who share our values. Now in our 172nd year of ministry to the church, the academy, and the world, Garrett is a strong, growing, thriving community of faith and learning that represents the fullness of the global church's witness.

During this past academic year, Garrett welcomed its largest entering class in over a decade for a fifth straight year, with 135 new students, and a current enrollment of 324 students representing 38 states and 24 nations from across the globe. We continue to see growth in our student body from Asia, Africa, and Latin America, adding to an already richly diverse student body. While our denominational diversity also continues to grow, we also proudly welcomed growth in our United Methodist students who constitute more than half of our student body. Our faculty also reflect this regional and global diversity, with fully half originating from nations outside the United States.

Our growth in recent years continues to reflect patterns seen across theological education, mainly in distance and on-line learners. For the first time in our history, distance learners in the entering class outnumbered residential students. This has allowed for truly global learning spaces that have enriched our conversations and our overall learning environment. We're blessed to have the world represented in our classrooms, which also impacts how our faculty teach, what they research, and for whom.

Over the last year Garrett has also been blessed by multiple major grants to fund faculty research and institutional priorities. A major grant is funding the work of our Center for Ecological Regeneration, allowing the seminary to partner with local congregations in the Midwest to equip them to respond to climate change in their communities and the disproportionate impact it tends to have on the poor and local economies. Another major grant is funding work in our Centro Raíces Latinas to strengthen Hispanic-Latiné pastoral leaders and congregations, helping clergy and communities build institutional capacity and expand their ministries. Yet another grant is helping to expand the reach and impact of our Garrett Collective, our lifelong learning and resource platform that seeks to make theological education accessible and affordable to a significantly broader audience.

Garrett's world-class faculty continue developing curricular innovations that are responsive to the church's growing needs, while also contributing a significant body of scholarly work to their respective fields. They are also partnering with annual conferences and local churches in delivering much needed programming for leadership development and faith formation, an expanding focus of our Strategic Initiatives and Partnerships division. Garrett is proud to be a United Methodist institution, and proud to continue to deepen its partnership and programming with annual conferences around the globe.

RETIRED CLERGY HOUSING CORPORATION

The Virginia Annual Conference in 1932 took to heart Galatians, 6:10 "So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith." The Conference realized that many of our retired clergy needed attractive, affordable housing and Retired Clergy Housing Corporation was established. Through the years, the number of properties has changed but the mission is still the same "to provide attractive, affordable housing to the needful retired clergy of the Virginia Annual Conference who qualify."

Due to the great work of the conference pension program, the RCHC Board has expanded the definition of needful to include financial, physical and emotional support. The majority of our 19 properties are accessible to people with disabilities. Therefore, this ministry has opened itself to retired clergy families dealing with accessibility-related housing needs.

The Shepherd's Fund assisted one home in North Chesterfield to be renovated in order to accommodate the needs of its new residents. With assistance from the Association of Retired Ministers and Spouses (ARMS) and the Shepherd's Fund, we were able to replace carpeting in one residence with flooring. This will provide greater mobility and a sense of stability for one resident who now depends on a rolling walker. In addition, our resident, Rev. Laughton Corr, earned his heavenly

reward. Our thoughts and prayers continue to be with his wife, Ruby.

The RCHC budget is a faith budget. The rental income does not cover our budget. We depend on donations from individuals, churches, and organizations. This is why I am asking you to participate in our Covenant of Gratitude.

The Covenant of Gratitude requests a commitment of a \$1 minimum per commissioned Provisional Elder and Deacon at this Annual Conference session. With the ever-increasing cost of providing support, I am asking you to consider a gift of \$10 per commissioned Provisional Elder and Deacon at this Annual Conference. Your ongoing support is important to meet the needs of those we serve.

I also invite you to make RCHC a part of your estate planning. If you are interested in learning more about how to support this mission, please contact Rev. Charles Wickham at 804 474 8724 or email him at cwickham@pinnacleliving.org and he will be happy to meet you.

On behalf of the RCHC Board of Directors, I thank you in advance for any assistance you give. All the hard work is so worthwhile when you hear a resident say, “Thank you for the blessing of this wonderful home!” Our clergy and their families have given themselves to the service of God and what an honor to now help support them with housing.

–Mahood Fonville, RCHC Board of Directors, Chair

PREACHERS’ RELIEF SOCIETY

The Preachers’ Relief Society has been a ministry to the clergy of the Virginia Annual Conference since 1870. The sole purpose is to assist clergy families who are facing emergency financial needs.

If in need, clergy, retired and active, their widows and widowers should apply for help through their District Superintendent. The Superintendent will forward the request to the Society with a recommendation as to how large a grant should be awarded. Each request is responded to immediately in what the Society believes is appropriate after it has carefully evaluated the crisis and also considered the financial resources of the Society. All grants given are confidential. The recipients, of course, are free to disclose whatever they wish.

The Society welcomes contributions. In recent years these have been small in number. Fortunately, the Society’s ability to provide grants has been sustained by the returns on its investments. The Mercadante Riggan Wealth Management Group of Davenport and Company currently serves as the Society’s investment advisors. Those wishing to contribute to this ministry may contact our treasurer, Katherine Kidwell at kbkidwell@msn.com.

The current directors of the Society are: Robert F. Cofield, Jr., president; Edward D. Lilly, vice-president; Clark D. Cundiff, secretary; Katherine Kidwell, treasurer; Esther Agbosu; Gary Chiaverotti; Peter Griffin, Scott M. Rimer and James S. Mathews.

–Robert F. Cofield Jr., President

ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED MINISTERS (ARMS)

ARMS is a fellowship for clergy (including deacons and local pastors,) spouses, widows, and widowers of ministers in their retired years. But don’t be fooled. ARMS members are not rocking away their retirement years. We want to uplift pre-retirees, empower their ministries, and share institutional memories of the Virginia Conference.

For the newly retired, we would be delighted if you attended our Fall 2025 retreat. We will be at the lovely Eagle Eire Retreat Center near Lynchburg, Virginia, this year. We are grateful to the Virginia Conference Board of Pensions for offering financial support to ARMS. We would be delighted for suggestions for future events, such as learning events, mission projects, storytelling festivals, and how to widen the circle of fellowship.

–Dorothy McNeer O’Quinn

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The History Update Committee is continuing its work on preparing an updated history of the Virginia Conference focusing on the last 70 years. A committee of some 15 persons and other volunteers have been drafting chapters on selected topics important for telling the story. Some drafts are completed and our goal is to complete all drafts by November 25, 2025. We will be looking for editorial review by persons familiar with the respective topics and the assistance of a general editor yet to be identified. We expect that our project will be digital in format so as to allow for flexibility in content together with the possible publication of an abbreviated print version. Some funds have been made available to help with the financing of the project.

– Jim Atheran, *Chairman*

**Nominations for 2025 Annual Conference
Virginia United Methodist Conference Historical Society Trustees 2025-2026**

Officers for 2025-26

President: Mike Browder
Secretary: Barbara Lewis
Historians: Stephanie Davis and Laurie Preston

Vice President: David Meyers
Treasurer: Wayne Snead
Nominations Chair: Jim Smith

CLERGY	LAITY
Evelyn Archer-Taminger	Mary Ashton Athearn
W. James Athearn	Robert S. Brock
Mark Brown	Ann Callendar
Michael Browder, President	Thelma Crowder
Carlton Casey	Mark Day
Linda E. F. Crabbs	Linda Ennis
Roger Dowdy	Jesse Fanshaw
Raymond Edmonds Jr.	Nina Frederick
Carl Ennis	Gerald Gordon
Dwala Ferrell	Ann Keeling
Kendra Grimes	Jack King
Jerry John	Audrey Lewis
Bruce Johnson	Myra P. Lindsey
Seonyoung Kim	David Meyer
Barbara Lewis	Brenda NeSmith
Samuel NeSmith	Kait Priest
Patrick Pillow	Laurie Preston
Wayne Rickman	Marilyn Riddle
James (Jim) Smith, Nominations Chair	JoEllen Fulk Smith
Arthur (Art) D. Thomas	Betty Ann Spiers
William (Bill) Wade	Bobby Spiers
Daniel Wray	Jon D. Vrana
Cabinet Representativ	Kathi Hughes Wise
	Neal Wise

Stephen Mansfield, Emeritus

Ex-Officio: Foundation Presidents/Heritage Editor and Conference Archivist

The William Watters Foundation

The William Watters Foundation is responsible for preserving and interpreting the William Watters Gravesite, United Methodist Historic Site No. 7, located in McLean, Virginia.

William Watters was the first American-born Methodist itinerant preacher to be officially appointed to a circuit at the first Methodist Conference held in America, in Philadelphia in 1773.

In fall 2024, the Virginia Conference Historical Society granted the William Watters Foundation a generous allotment of funds from an endowment made by the estate of William “Bill” Arthur Olson. The foundation has several projects in mind for using the money: performing ground penetrating radar of the cemetery to find unmarked graves, repairing the driveway’s erosion damage, and installing a fence along the wooded side of the driveway to prevent pedestrians from crossing the property and trespassing on neighbors’ lawns.

David Worthington, the Global Ambassador of Methodist Heritage Sites for the United Methodist Church, visited the William Watters Gravesite on October 9, 2024. Members of the foundation board welcomed Mr. Worthington to the site, showed him around the property and discussed the significance of William Watters’ ministry in American United Methodist history. Worthington, in turn, advised us to strive to tell the story of William Watters by emphasizing historical events that were occurring at the time of his ministry. We then assisted Mr. Worthington to the next stop on his journey, the Old Stone Church Site in Leesburg.

—Myra P. Lindsey, President

The Old Stone Church Foundation

It is true that *The Old Stone Church* site in Leesburg, VA is not as well known as some historical sites. While Leesburg and its environs in Northern Virginia are steeped in the early history of our nation, they are equally steeped in the early history of Methodism on this continent.

Having mostly recovered from its Covid-induced inactivity, the *Old Stone Church Foundation* intends to vigorously promote *The Old Stone Church* site to an expanded set of persons and churches to the end that the site become better known and visited by persons and churches throughout Virginia. In addition, the Foundation intends to expand its membership list, engage in cooperative work with other history-oriented organizations, and improve our attention to administrative and operational obligations and details.

With the recent receipt of funds from the Historical Society and the revival of a beautifully inspiring Old Stone Church Prayer Walk project, *The Old Stone Church Foundation* finds itself at a tipping point wherein it can now strongly support its Promotion, Preservation and Interpretation efforts and initiatives. With this in mind, the Foundation is undertaking the following efforts for 2025:

1. |Increase the Foundation mailing list toward a year-end goal of 400 electronic and USPS addresses and \$4K annual membership income.
2. |Find the door key to the Old Stone Church that was unearthed by the archeological dig of the site in the 1960’s.
3. |Follow the lead of the VA Conference and modify By Laws, Job Descriptions, organization and operational/fili procedures to provide improved guidance to future Directors/Officers of the Foundation.
4. |Join with the local Morven Park social justice initiative to document the history of enslaved people of the United States.
5. |Encourage real and/or virtual pilgrimage to *The Old Stone Church* site by generating and publishing (in hard copy and digitally) resource packages for Confirmation Classes and Methodist History curricula.

On the 4th point above, the joint effort has benefits to both Morven Park and *The Old Stone Church Foundation*. The Foundation has 19th century Old Stone Church documents that record church-related activities of local enslaved people.

The documents are helpful to the Morven park initiative, a feature of which is the digitization of relevant records. Digitization of the records will be beneficial to *The Old Stone Church Foundation* at no cost to the Foundation.

On the 5th point above, the combination of the Prayer Walk project, an academic monograph in the files of the VCHS (Leesburg’s Old Stone Church 1766), and The Old Stone Church video form a strong, academically sound, resource package for real or virtual classroom use or pilgrimage. Achieving prime time readiness of these packages may require funds for publication and possible copyright permissions. If so, *The Old Stone Church Foundation* will either apply funds it has or seek grant funding.

The Old Stone Church Foundation is dedicated to Promoting, Preserving, and Interpreting The Old Stone Church site to the benefit of an expanding population of real and virtual visitors.

–Jack E. King, President

Virginia United Methodist HERITAGE

The objective of Virginia United Methodist *HERITAGE*, first published in 1973, has always been to carefully document, then tell the stories of our rich Virginia United Methodist history. Virginia United Methodist history enthusiasts prepare the stories of this bi-annual scholarly journal.

Last fall’s issue of *HERITAGE* featured *Charles Wesley: Sweet Singer of Methodism*, an insight into the life of Charles Wesley and his contributions to early Methodism. David Covington, the Global Ambassador of Methodist Heritage Sites, gave the speech at the Virginia Conference Historical Society meeting in October.

The issue also included the eponymously-named *The Rev. Dr. Robert Roszel Stephen Hough: A Life in Ministry*.

The Spring 2025 issue presented *An Essay in Mud*, a speech given by the venerable Raymond Fitzhugh Wrenn to the Old Stone Church Foundation in 1993. The story focused on two rescued ledgers of old district conference records covering the years 1885-1925. The records gave excellent insight into the goings-on of Northern Virginia Methodist Episcopal, South churches of that day.

The issue also included a story about William Watters, the first American-born Methodist Itinerant preacher called *Billie Watters Makes a Decision*, written by Fern C. Stukenbroeker.

Many Churches’ Mini-Histories, a feature begun in Spring 2024 *HERITAGE*, continues to give the individual church the opportunity to stand out by discussing something unique in that church’s history. Our Saddlebags segment continues to tell of the day-to-day experiences of circuit riders. Our Foundations features updates on the activities of the society’s three foundations: The Old Stone Church Foundation, The William Watters Foundation, and the Old Brunswick Circuit Foundation.

–Myra Lindsey, Editor

JOURNEY IN UNDERSTANDING – FROM TENT TO TABLE

Members: David Edinger, Hung Su Lim, Kay Nicholas, Alton Keel, Darcey Johnson, Jill Gaynor, Gennie Bowles, David Jimenez, Margie Hernandez, Claire Kent, Mark Ogren.

A tent narrows toward the center, pulling some close while others linger at the edges, a round table invites a different kind of gathering. It offers no hierarchy, no hidden corners, only the open grace, where each person finds a seat and a voice.

Introduction

At the 2024 General Conference, delegates removed language condemning homosexuality, lifted bans on ordaining LGBTQ+ clergy, expanded marriage to include a man and a woman or two consenting adults, and set up processes to reinstate pastors disciplined over their sexual orientation. The Judicial Council confirmed that local boards of trustees can decide whether to host same sex weddings and disaffiliation clauses gave way to reaffiliation policies across annual conferences. In response, bishops issued letters assuring congregations and pastors that no one would be forced against conscience to live out their faith.

Background on the Group’s Formation, Naming, Purpose, and Guidance

Born out of a narrowly divided vote on whether to apologize to the LGBTQ+ community, the Virginia Annual Conference 2024 formed a commission that brought together clergy and laity from LGBTQ+, progressive, centrist, and tradi-

tionalist perspectives, united by a shared desire to move beyond voting. Moving from an emphasis on fault and reparations to a reconciliatory approach, the name of a “Journey in Understanding” was adopted. Acknowledging their mandate “to pursue a more excellent way” the group committed to creating “a sacred space to listen, hold, and begin to heal the harms” experienced during long standing denominational discord. Throughout this unfolding process, two facilitators—Rev. Mark Ogren (providing spiritual formation and group structure) and Rev. Dr. Gary Mason (a renowned international expert and key figure in peacebuilding and conflict transformation, particularly in the Northern Ireland peace process)—helped orient the work.

The Group’s Approach: “Intentional Holy Listening”

Rejecting adversarial debate and recognizing that reconciliation is the work of the Holy Spirit, the group embraced **Intentional Holy Listening**—an active, non-judgmental practice of asking open-ended questions and bearing witness to each story. Over four listening sessions, invited voices were given three framing questions and uninterrupted time to speak. Although not every invitee participated, those who did found a rare space to be heard (some for the first time!), whether to recount deep wounds or to share hopes for the future. By creating “safe, holy spaces” and encouraging a posture of continuous learning, the group modeled an approach that could begin to bring reconciliation and true healing.

Findings: Stories That Opened Our Eyes

LGBTQ+ Voices

Many participants shared stories of exclusion that echoed patterns of trauma, including one who described experiencing “PTSD as a result of harm experienced...in the church,” where each new pastoral appointment brought renewed fear that their place in the community might once again be at risk. Others spoke of being “kicked out” once their sexuality was known, or even feeling “still half a member” when marriage and ordination were denied. A United Methodist pastor’s child recalled being warned not to “come out” for fear it would threaten their parent’s current job and future appointments. Yet amid the pain emerged hope—for belonging, for full recognition in marriage rites, and for ministries that “bring us together.”

Progressive and Centrist Voices

Progressives ranged from those eager to focus on what is next for our church to a call for unity. Doubts lingered about whether the middle could hold, yet many affirmed the metaphor of a big tent. “If we cannot think alike, can we not love alike?” quoted one guest, invoking Wesley’s enduring challenge. Allies celebrated that post GC24 they felt freer to share their identity, with one pastor noting she could finally post family photos without fear. Others lamented the loss of potential leaders who left seminary or were ordained elsewhere before reforms took hold.

Traditionalist Voices

Traditionalists voiced fear and anxiety: “Will I be forced to go against my theological beliefs?” they asked. Anxiety over pastoral appointments and fear of ostracism by progressive colleagues ran deep. Yet many longed for a “big tent” that could hold divergent convictions. One contributor noted that “diversity in unity is a big strength in the UMC,” and urged mutual respect across the spectrum. The repeated refrain was a desire for trust and safe expression of conscience.

Through these dialogues, the group witnessed hearts soften and trust begin to form, as “intentional holy listening” opened space for genuine connection—fostering collaboration across deeply held differences. Participants on all sides expressed sincere empathy upon hearing personal stories—a clear sign of the Holy Spirit at work.

Recommendations

To sustain faithful discernment grounded in grace and the Spirit’s relational work, we propose shifting from the metaphor of a big tent to sacred table spaces to foment healing across the Virginia Conference. We recommend:

- Moving from voting to reconciliation and transformation through relationships founded on God’s love and grace as heard in Jesus’ words: love God and your neighbor as yourself.
- Engaging in *intentional holy listening* that is appropriate in your local context.

The *Journey in Understanding* work has already softened hearts and opened new paths toward reconciliation—fruit that voting alone cannot yield. As we present this report, we honor our true diversity, deepen our community bonds, and witness to Christ’s reconciling love at His shared table.

—David J. Jimenez

VIRGINIA UNITED METHODIST FOUNDATION, INC.

Virginia United Methodist Development Company, LLC

Since 1971, the Virginia United Methodist Foundation has supported the churches and ministries of the Virginia Annual Conference by promoting faithful stewardship and providing resources to strengthen long-term ministry. Over the past 15 years, the Foundation has launched several strategic initiatives to deepen its mission impact.

The first initiative was the engagement of professional financial advisory services to manage endowments and investment accounts for the Foundation, local churches, and related agencies. The Kelly-Nagel Group, an institutional investment consulting team within Merrill Lynch's Global Institutional Consulting Group, brings deep experience in serving nonprofit, faith-based organizations. As a result, the Foundation's assets under management have grown from approximately \$28 million to more than \$110 million as of December 31, 2024.

In 2014, the Foundation created the Virginia United Methodist Development Company, LLC—a wholly owned subsidiary—to provide loans for ministry expansion projects. These loans are made possible through investments from individuals, churches, and United Methodist agencies. Now celebrating its tenth year, the Development Company manages over 650 investment accounts and has made more than \$40 million in loans to over 40 churches across Virginia.

In the fall of 2023, the Foundation gathered leaders from the Conference, Wespeth, and Methodist-affiliated universities to discern new ways of supporting churches and ministries in today's changing context. Broad input identified key areas of need, including grant writing, fundraising support, and creative approaches to funding new ministries.

In response, the Foundation has launched a new Office of Philanthropy and Development to focus on these emerging priorities. By mid-2025, the Foundation will be fully staffed for this expanded vision, including a new Vice President of Philanthropy and Development. We trust this next chapter will build on our history of service and continue to meet the evolving needs of our churches and ministries across the Conference.

—David Domnisse, President

REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE STATISTICIAN

REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE STATISTICIAN

	Total Professing Members at Beginning of Year	Received and Restored on Profession of Christian Faith	Net Transferred in (out) from other United Methodist Churches	Net Transferred in (out) from non-United Methodist Churches	Removed by Charge Conference action and prior year corrections	Withdrawn from Professing Membership	Removed by death	Total Professing Members at End of Year	Net Change in Membership	Percent Change	Average attendance at all weekly worship services	Number of Persons Baptized
Coastal Virginia	31,336	209	-51	14	480	101	335	30,592	-744	-2.4%	10,765	144
Living Waters	20,287	93	4	14	122	36	249	19,991	-296	-1.5%	6,380	78
Mission Rivers	35,612	221	18	-58	232	172	385	35,004	-608	-1.7%	9,756	161
Mountain View	14,035	49	16	-19	183	54	178	13,666	-369	-2.6%	4,988	23
Northern Virginia	61,523	627	-4	38	1,401	262	305	60,216	-1,307	-2.1%	17,139	409
Shenandoah River	24,099	105	-1	-60	651	91	246	23,155	-944	-3.9%	6,101	77
Three Notch'd	44,170	322	-199	-14	192	118	363	43,606	-564	-1.3%	12,107	251
Valley Ridge	26,217	120	-294	-54	1,114	170	335	24,370	-1,847	-7.0%	8,226	137
Totals for 2024	257,279	1,746	-511	-139	4,375	1,004	2,396	250,600	-6,679	-2.6%	75,462	1,280

COUNCIL ON FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION NARRATIVE BUDGET 2026

For 2026, CFA is presenting a budget in two forms: a narrative budget and a numerical budget. The narrative budget, presented below, is an attempt to walk through the development of the budget, outline the key principles and highlights of the budget, and answer some questions about the budget and apportionments connected to the budget. The numerical budget, which follows the narrative budget, is an effort to show the clear allocation of apportionment collections and spending plans for the Annual Conference in 2026. Following these two items, you'll find a summary of the CFA policies for 2026.

WHY WOULD WE DO THIS?

- ▶ Imperative of the Extended Extended Cabinet
 - In 2024, during the “Extended Extended Cabinet” process, the team discerned a narrative budget process would allow the Annual Conference to see more clearly the missional outputs of income and spending. Now CFA, in consultation with ministry offices around the Annual Conference, established this new methodology for budgeting in the hopes that it can allow the Virginia Annual Conference to see our budget as a missional document.
- ▶ Budget as a missional document
 - Because the budget is a missional document, it is the hope that CFA can show some particular alignment with the work of the United Methodist Church in Virginia. First, the primary objective of the Annual Conference is to resource the local church. *The Book of Discipline*, in describing the mission of the United Methodist Church, shares that the local church and extension ministries are the most effective arenas through which disciple making occurs. The 2026 budget is an attempt to resource the local church and extension ministries first and then resource the wider United Methodist connection, all with the hopes of transforming the world.
 - To do this, the budget has been broken down into four “buckets”:

FOUR “BUCKETS”

- ▶ The four buckets are...
 - Ministry Infrastructure – these are the costs to provide needed institutional structure to local churches and extension ministries throughout the Annual Conference.
 - Resourcing Connection – these are the costs to provide intentional opportunities for connected, transformational ministries throughout the Annual Conference.
 - Retired Clergy Health Support – these are the costs to support clergy who have sustained local churches and extension ministries throughout their careers and have now taken on retirement status.
 - Sending into Worldwide Connection – these are the costs to live into the United Methodist connection beyond the Virginia Annual Conference.
- ▶ These categories are allocated as a result of the apportionment giving of United Methodists around Virginia.
- ▶ Each category has importance to the overall missional capacity of the Virginia Annual Conference.
- ▶ Spending in these four categories is not even. For example, it is more expensive to provide benefits to retired clergy than it is to maintain ministry infrastructure.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR APPORTIONMENTS?

- ▶ Overall, apportionments are down from 2025

- This is largely due to removing Active Clergy Health apportionment and pivoting this cost to a direct bill to local churches.
- However, that same action has increased some of our expenses related to conference staff, campus ministry, and appointive cabinet expenses. Because the benefits of clergy in connectional roles were paid out of the former Active Clergy Health apportionment, those are now assigned as a part of the total personnel costs of the offices that employ clergy in the Annual Conference.
- This, along with some other changes, means that the total Conference Mission and Ministries apportionments are up 4.7% from 2025.
- There has also been an increase in the cost of offering Retired Clergy Health benefits, up 3.6% from 2025.
- ▶ The model for apportionments is shifting
 - First, you'll notice there are new numerical codes for apportionment line items. Lines 101, 102, 103, and 104 replace the previously used "400-series" line items. Because there are new categories for apportionments, this will help ensure we are assigning apportionments to the appropriate, current line item rather than trying to fit in a former methodology.
 - The four apportionment line items are as follows:
 - 101: Conference Mission and Ministries – Committed
 - These are funds that contractually or covenantally have already been allocated for the conference to spend and will be prioritized for payment during the 2026 budget year.
 - This includes costs from both the Ministry Infrastructure and the Resourcing Connection buckets.
 - 102: Conference Mission and Ministries – Expected
 - These are the expected costs of resourcing the local church and doing mission and ministry in 2026.
 - This includes costs from both the Ministry Infrastructure and the Resourcing Connection buckets.
 - 103: Retired Clergy Health
 - These are the expenses that support retired clergy health benefits and comprise the Retired Clergy Health Support bucket.
 - 104: General and Jurisdictional Ministries
 - These expenses represent our share of general and jurisdictional apportionments and comprise the Sending into Worldwide Connection bucket.
- ▶ Moving forward, as we live into this new missional model of budgeting together, CFA is asking that local churches make an adjustment to how they pay apportionments.
 - First, CFA asks that local churches pay the committed costs of ministry, those now found in line 101, first.
 - This represents approximately $\frac{1}{3}$ of each church's apportioned figure.
 - Once local churches have paid line 101 apportionments, they are then asked to pay the remainder of their apportioned figure by the end of the year.
 - By the end of the year, the hope is that all churches have paid 100% of their apportioned figure. This enables our entire Annual Conference to be in mission and ministry together.
 - As local churches are paying apportionments, CFA asks that you join your hearts with the entire Annual Conference in a constant sense of prayer and discernment that our giving would have a Spirit-filled capacity for impact and that we would have a consistent mind for the efficient and effective use of funds shared for deployment around the Annual Conference.

MISSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

- ▶ In the supporting schedule for apportionment lines 101 and 102, you will find nearly 30 elements of the work of the Annual Conference that are impacted by apportionments. Some missional highlights from these categories include:
 - Cabinet – the funds in this line item cover the work of the Appointive Cabinet. These funds ensure that these key leaders can be present in local churches, be leaders in the Annual Conference, and be missional strategists in the geographic areas they serve. Additionally, this fund includes support for the work of belonging and advocacy as the Director is on the appointive cabinet.
 - Ministries at Educational Institutions – the funds in this line item allow campus ministries around the Virginia Annual Conference to have needed resources to reach young people at colleges and universities throughout the Commonwealth.
 - Ministry offices – The line items for the Center for Clergy Excellence, Missional and Community Engagement, Discipleship and Congregational Vitality, and Connection and Innovation resource the work of the conference office to train and equip clergy and laity to be in ministry through the local church to communities across the Commonwealth of Virginia.
 - Grantmaking cooperative – This new methodology for funding great, shared ideas in the Annual Conference is ready to enter its second funding cycle. In addition to funds from apportionments, this work will be supported by other funding sources coming with resources from closed churches.

OTHER BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

- ▶ Line 103 – Retired Clergy Health
 - 1.35m savings from direct bill shift
 - Funds held for future benefits – this represents monies contributed from disaffiliated churches.
- ▶ Line 104 – General and Jurisdictional Ministries
 - The total number of this apportionment is unchanged from 2025. CFA will support these apportionments directly based on apportionment receipts.
 - For more information about each of these apportionments, please visit the following links:
 - [Episcopal Fund](#)
 - [World Service](#)
 - [Ministerial Education](#)
 - [Black College Fund](#)
 - [Africa University Fund](#)
 - [General Administration](#)
 - [Interdenominational Cooperation Fund](#)
 - [Southeastern Jurisdiction](#)

GOALS FOR 2026 AND BEYOND

- ▶ **Returning resources to the local church:** because the top priority of the Annual Conference is to resource the local church, the goal of the budget is to ensure the local church has the resources it needs to connect in community and transform neighborhoods around Virginia.
- ▶ **Stabilizing reserves:** while conditions for ministry in Virginia are challenging now, there is a recognition that a larger and more stable reserve fund will enable the impact of United Methodism in Virginia to be more widespread and generational.

- ▶ **Creative development:** as we look to reduce the amount of apportionments moving forward, the Annual Conference will also be relying on funds from closed churches, grants, and other forms of alternative fundraising to expand the capacity of the Annual Conference to resource local churches and extension ministries to be transformation agents around the world.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE WORK OF THIS BUDGET AND CFA, PLEASE WATCH THIS CONVERSATION WITH MEMBERS OF CFA: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7jb4ngftvzy>