

**QUARTERLY
REPORT**



THE



SOURCE

QUARTER 4 AND 2025 IN REVIEW REPORT

February 2026

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The Q Source

THE NAME

The "Q source" (from the German word "Quelle," meaning "source") is a hypothetical, lost collection of sayings of Jesus, which biblical scholars believe was the primary source used by the authors of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.

WHAT IS THIS REPORT

This report aims to give Virginia Conference members an easy digest of the work that is happening across the Virginia Conference on a regular basis. The hope would be that conference clergy and laity could more readily have examples of how ministry is happening across the conference, point to "bright spots" in the VAUMC, and expect more regular updates from operational offices such as Treasurer's Office and VUMPI.

Members can anticipate an update in this format every quarter. Feedback or questions are welcome by emailing VAUMC Director of Communications at MadelineWhite@vaumc.org.



News within the connection



NOMINATIONS CAMPAIGN: WE NEED YOUR VOICE

This year, a new nominations campaign called We Need Your Voice is launching, seeking to widen the table of leadership in the Virginia Conference by inviting more people—across lines of age, experience, culture, and background—to share their gifts in service on our committees, boards, and agencies. Martha Stokes, Conference Lay Leader and Chair of the Conference Nominations Committee, and Rev. Lan Davis Wilson, Conference Director of Belonging & Advocacy, are leading this effort. [Learn more...](#)



FOOD PANTRY MINISTRY SUPPORTED

The Virginia Annual Conference and Virginia United Methodist Foundation partnered on the Emergency Food Response Fund in the fall of 2025. This fund was designed to bridge the gap for neighbors facing increased food insecurity during the government shutdown. This fund helped 72 local UMC-connected food pantries and community feeding ministries as well as larger relief networks serving the Commonwealth Feeding America, FeedMore, etc.

Belonging & Advocacy

IMMIGRANT ADVOCACY RESOURCES LAUNCHED

The Virginia Conference is deepening its commitment to faithful, informed, and compassionate immigrant advocacy with the launch of a new online hub: vaumc.org/immigrantadvocacy. These resources are designed to equip clergy, congregations, and leaders across Virginia Conference of The United Methodist Church to respond faithfully to the realities facing immigrant neighbors in our communities.

On the site you'll find practical toolkits, printable resources, and step-by-step guides to help churches prepare, respond, and advocate with clarity and care. Materials include “know your rights” resources, guidance for congregations navigating moments of fear or uncertainty, and tools that support both immigrants and those seeking to stand in solidarity with them.

In addition to downloadable resources, the site also highlights upcoming Zoom trainings led by the Conference's Immigration Response Team. These sessions will offer timely information, theological grounding, and concrete next steps for advocacy—whether you are just beginning this work or looking to deepen existing efforts in your local context.

This initiative reflects our shared calling to love our neighbors, seek justice, and bear witness to the dignity of every person. We invite clergy and laity alike to explore the resources, share them widely, and join us in this ongoing work of advocacy and belonging.



Belonging & Advocacy

VAUMC BELONGING & ADVOCACY FACEBOOK PAGE LAUNCHED

We're excited to announce the launch of a new Facebook page: Virginia United Methodists | Belonging & Advocacy—a space dedicated to sharing how the Virginia Conference of The United Methodist Church is living out its call to pursue justice and build bridges to beloved community.

This page lifts up the ongoing work of Belonging & Advocacy across the conference, grounded in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the United Methodist Social Principles, and our baptismal vows. It's a place to stay connected to what's happening, why it matters, and how you can engage.

We'll also be rolling out practical tools and timely tips for clergy and laity—starting with tips on preaching justice in today's complex and challenging moment. Follow the page, share it widely, and join the conversation as we continue building a Church that shows up, speaks up, and creates spaces where all God's people know they belong.



**YOU
BELONG
HERE**

Clergy Excellence

UPCOMING EVENT

Clergy Retreat

In ministry, we pour so much of ourselves into others that we can forget to notice the soil holding us up. This retreat invites clergy to slow down, breathe deep, and rediscover the grace that grounds us. Building on the rich Wesleyan tradition, our keynote sessions will connect the familiar categories of prevenient, justifying, and sanctifying grace to essential dimensions of Wesleyan thought. Come ready to reflect, share, worship, and sink your roots a little deeper into the sustaining grace that helps us flourish.

Who: All clergy invited

Date: March 10-11, 2026

Location: Virginia Crossings

Cost: \$65 (includes lunch and supplies. Lodging not included)

Registration link:

<https://www.cognitofrms.com/VAUMC/CECandidacySummitFebruary2026>



Clergy Excellence

C.P.E. ALTERNATIVE PILOT IN PROCESS

This fall, five provisional members are taking part in the Virginia Conference UMC's C.P.E. Alternative Program entitled: "Sacred Encounters." Completion of this program is the equivalent of 0.5 units of Clinical Pastoral Education (C.P.E.), which is required to apply for full membership and ordination. This program was created when the Board of Ordained Ministry noticed that people were delayed in the process and unable to complete this requirement for a myriad of reasons:

- The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry stopped offering its online C.P.E. option.
- Some provisional deacons found it impossible to do a C.P.E. in a hospital setting due to their non-local church setting and the hours required.
- Some provisional elders have not been able to complete this requirement due to family demands.

While the Board of Ordained Ministry believes that the hospital C.P.E. setting is superior, they think this program meets a need and provides pastors with the education they will need as they go on to be elders. The beauty of this online program is that it allows the pastors to live out their contact hours within their settings. It also gives the VAUMC the ability to enable these pastors to learn from our own. We were blessed to have the following pastors lead the online didactic learning modules:

- Module 1:** Healthy Boundaries: Rev. Deborah Lewis
- Module 2:** Grief, Loss, and Suffering: Rev. Dr. Ryan LaRock
- Module 4:** Empathetic Listening: Rev. Meghan Roth Clayton
- Module 5:** Family Systems: Rev. Dr. Rhonda VanDyke
- Module 6:** Ministry in the Midst of Trauma: Dr. Joy Kreider
- Module 7:** Spiritual Disciplines: Rev. Bob Chapman

To create a non-biased and safe space for participants to share, we invited a supervisor and teaching assistant from outside of the VAUMC. Dr. Joy Kreider, a neuroscientist, also trained in trauma-informed ministry, is the supervisor and holds group meetings with these candidates as they process the didactic learning together, share verbatims, and discuss how they are living out what they are learning in their ministry settings. Rev. Stephanie Dunn, a deacon from the Tennessee/Western Kentucky Annual Conference, serves as the teaching assistant, receiving the written materials and providing feedback to the candidates. We are excited about the future possibilities of this program!



Connectional Ministries

REV. CHRIS MCLAIN, DIRECTOR OF CONNECTIONAL MINISTRIES

"I am quite confident that the One who began a good work in you will go on completing it until the Day of Jesus Christ comes," -Philippians 1:6, New Jerusalem Bible.

I am confident. Confident in you, ministers. Confident in you, laity. Confident in you, pastors. Confident in you, chaplains and extension ministers. Confident, even in rumbling times, times like birth pangs, God helping us! Confident that Jesus Christ is working in and through all of us right now. Confident that Jesus is inviting us into service and healing, into confession, forgiveness and celebration, into restoration and, most of all, into our several communities. I'm confident because when I am with you I see Jesus in your joy and in your sorrow. I'm confident because when I listen to God with you, I hear what Jesus invites us to leave behind and to take up. I'm confident because I know and have experienced how you hold others in the love of Jesus, and I know that the same love of God holds you.

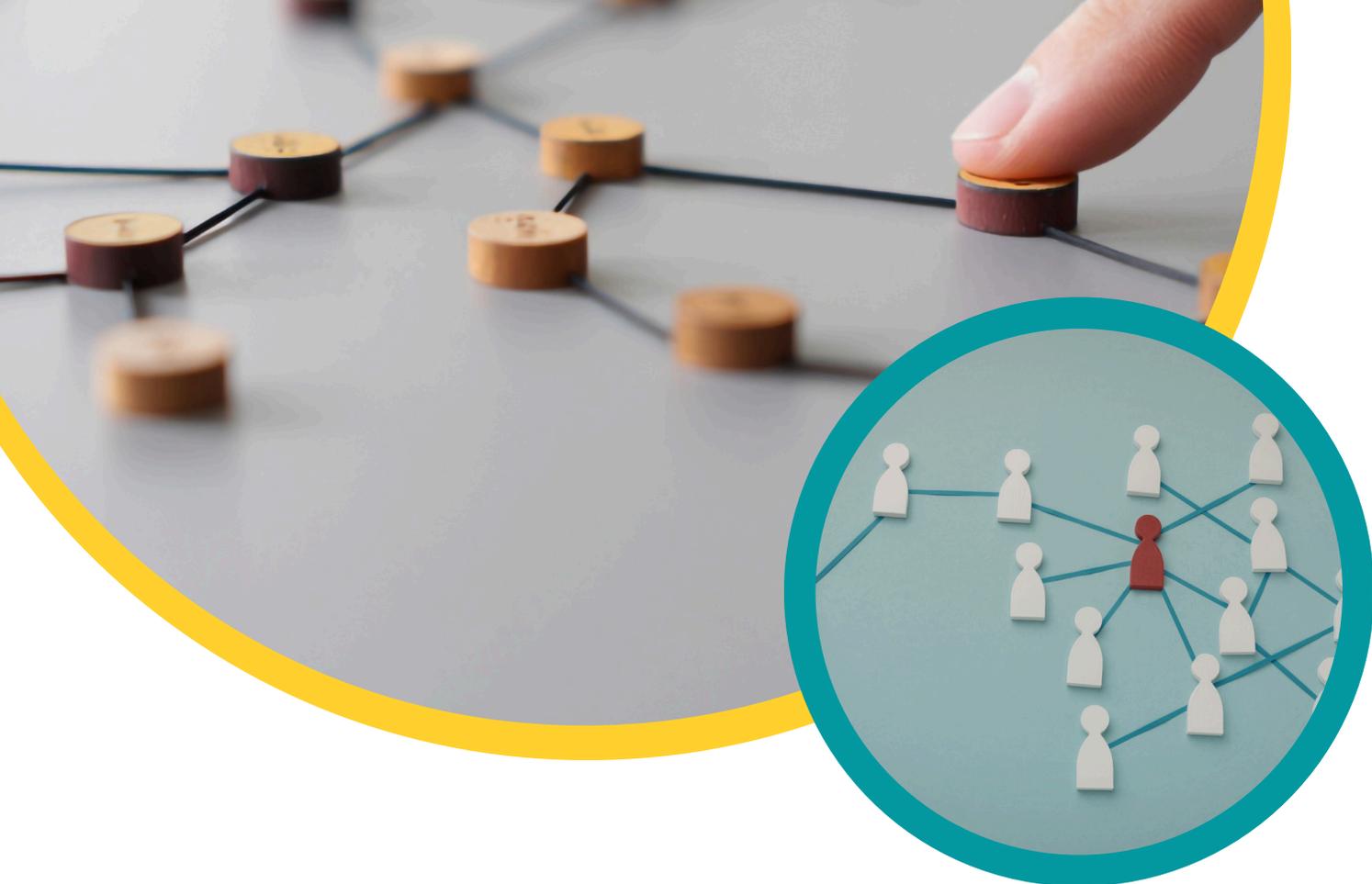
I am Chris Mclain, the new Director of Connectional Ministries. I work with the Annual Conference Program Staff to ensure that our Conference work is a true service to the United Methodist ministers and ministries in Virginia by connecting and resourcing the ministries, districts, and Mission Partners (like GraceInside, Pinnacle Living and ShineForth, for example.) From our vantage point, we see our shared Conference ministry through glimpses, conversations and relationships all around. We hear recurring themes like, "where will we find the time, the people, the finances and the vision to reach our community." We hear good news, too, like we heard from Encourageous Consultants. They discovered that the number one indicator of vitality in our churches is a successful relationship between clergy and lay leadership. Not size, not age, not finances but teamwork matters most to be vital.



Connectional Ministries

We get to see, hear and connect with you in order to serve all. To me that means, I want you to be seen and heard and know it. We are taking concrete steps to stay grounded in serving you where the rubber meets the road. To make real that commitment, at every Program Staff meeting we review where our staff have been, what they are seeing and hearing and learning about the resourcing needs and strengths of God's Virginia Annual Conference and we aim to continually engage settings we haven't connected with lately. We are tracking your local sharing and identifying trends so that we can identify current tools to support you and to share in other settings which may benefit. We are building a library of help tools. We are also looking at things from your point of view to ensure that the resources you need are easier to find so that you can be undergirded in reaching your community with the love of God in Jesus.

In addition to these emphases, the work you might expect from this office continues through the transition from Rev. Dr. Page to me such as preparation for Annual Conference, connection with pilot efforts for churches to work together to serve their communities and picking up work from the Grants Collaborative. The Grants Collaborative is still in formation. It's purpose is to be a one-stop Grant and Scholarship support for ministry and leadership by pooling the application process for multiple funding partners such as the United Methodist Foundation and the United Women in Faith. This quarter \$97,700 of non-apportioned funds were granted out by the collective to 10 recipients where applicants demonstrated tremendous fruit of churches working connectionally and connecting to serve in their communities: serving needs in housing, hunger, mental health, servant leadership development and renewal, welcoming the stranger/immigrant support.



Connectional Ministries

What is the Connectional Table you may ask? This body is like the Church Council for the Annual Conference and was stewarded into existence by the Rev. Dr. Page. At our most recent meeting, we emphatically affirmed local ministries as our purpose. This is where everything happens. It's you, on the ground, reaching out in your local communities. Seeing you, hearing you and connecting with you, Bishop Sue lifted up Leadership Development and Community Engagement as the most essential tools needed to help us all follow Jesus and incarnate Jesus in the world. She said that it's in this outreaching ministry that we find great joy.

Joy is a sign of the great work God is doing in you. I am confident there will be tears, I am confident there will be strengthening, I am confident there will be learning, I am confident there will be joy--for us all, together, connected and serving. So, look and listen with us for the opportunities. Opportunities on your district and from the Conference to help the good work God will bring to completion in you, your ministry and creation.

Discipleship

In November 2025, nearly 300 youth and adults gathered to learn what it means to #BeUMC. Participants engaged in leadership tracks that five times over the weekend, as they explored our United Methodist Identity in one of four areas: Personal and Social Holiness (“BeUMC Inside and Out”), Vocation and Calling (“BeUMC: Next Steps”), Service and Advocacy (“BeUMC: Advocate and Serve”), and the Worldwide Connection (“BeUMC Around the World”). Worship included music by a combined youth/adult band, and hosted gifted preachers and leaders: Rev. Dr. Stephanie Moore Hand (Friday evening’s preacher), Charlie Conder (Saturday evening), and Bishop Sue Hauptert-Johnson (Sunday morning). On Saturday morning, members of the conference youth council led a devotional experience that included a call to dream about the future of the United Methodist Church. The retreat was a powerful way to equip youth and adults for discipleship in their communities. The Fall 2026 Retreat is scheduled for **November 6-8, 2026**, at the Rappahannock Camp and Retreat Center in Richardsville, VA.



YOUNG ADULTS HEAD ABROAD

In July 2026, a team of youth and adults from the Virginia Annual Conference will join young people from around the world in Dublin, Ireland for the Global Young Peoples’ Convocation. This event focuses on equipping youth and young adults to work through their annual conferences to craft legislation for General Conference, and is focused on equipping young leaders for leadership in the church. Please keep this team in prayer, and contact **Dwayne Stinson** if you would like to support a youth who is participating.

Discipleship

In 2025, over 400 individual Lay Servants took 674 courses through conference and district Lay Servant Ministries course offerings. An additional 58 students took courses to receive certification as Certified Lay Ministers.



2026 HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING

200+

campus ministries avg. weekly worship attendance

500

students over course of year

100+

students

In the 2024-25 academic year, VAUMC-supported campus ministries reported an average weekly worship attendance of over 200, which reflected over 500 individual students over the course of the year; over 100 students participated in missions; 209 student leaders led ministries at their schools, including 79 new leaders; campus ministry discipleship opportunities involved an average of more than 200 students each week, with over 325 unique students involved. Three graduates from campus ministries are enrolled in seminary.

These statistics do not include students from VAUMC-affiliated colleges and universities, which nurture students' discipleship and call and encourage student leadership all year long as well.



Intergenerational Formation

2025 YEAR HIGHLIGHTS

In 2025, the Office of Intergenerational Formation strengthened its work of resourcing local churches and ministry partners as they nurtured meaningful, faith-shaping relationships across generations.

- The office convened the first Camp Directors Association meeting, fostering shared learning, prayer, collaboration, and visioning among the conference's five camp and retreat centers
- the Hatching Faith team worshiped alongside cohort congregations and witnessed the creative ways churches are intentionally forming disciples of all ages, particularly by engaging Christ's youngest disciples in worship.
- The year concluded with the applications for Hatching Faith year two closing.
- the Interactive Advent Calendar was created and distributed to equip congregations and households with simple, meaningful intergenerational practices throughout the season, supporting daily prayer, storytelling, service, and wonder
- Across all five Virginia UMC Camp and Retreat Centers, over 2,700 people participated in Summer Camp and over 30,000 people participated in year-round retreat ministries in 2025.

2026 INITIATIVES

- Hatching Faith year two will be run with two full cohorts, running simultaneously.
- Be on the lookout for more information about the Wonder Summit: Reimagining Congregational Worship & Prayer with Children, to be held **November 4-6, 2026**, at Lake Junaluska in partnership with the Western North Carolina Conference, inviting ministry leaders across the Southeastern Jurisdiction to reimagine how children help shape the worshipping life of the Church.

Missional & Community Engagement

FLOODING IN MOZAMBIQUE

Since the start of the rainy season in southern Africa, more than 100 people have died and hundreds of thousands have been displaced because of widespread flooding. Bishop João Filimone Sambo visited affected areas and brought supplies to a relief center. He has urged people to stay safe and is appealing for prayer support. United Methodists are helping with relief efforts, even as many churches and church members themselves are struggling with the impact from the flooding. Donations can be made to the **United Methodist Committee on Relief's International Disaster Response Advance #982450**.

NATIVE AMERICAN MINISTRIES UPDATE

Five tribal chiefs helped lead the Generational Healing Summit on **Nov. 7-9, 2025**, along with Indigenous sociologists, counselors, musicians, storytellers, and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) officials. Members of nine tribal groups participated, along with non-tribal friends, for a total of 72 in attendance over three days. It was the first event of its kind in Virginia.

On Friday evening, Chief Stephen Adkins, Chickahominy, brought a historical perspective on Indigenous trauma in Virginia, from the 15th century to present day. Careful attention was given to the era of assimilation and boarding schools, roughly 1860-1969. Several speakers brought personal reflections on their time in boarding schools, and the impact upon their families. Read more about the event and historical implications on the conference website.

Caption: Rev. Donald Robinson, Tuscarora, (left) and Chief Stephen Adkins, Chickahominy (right)



Treasurer

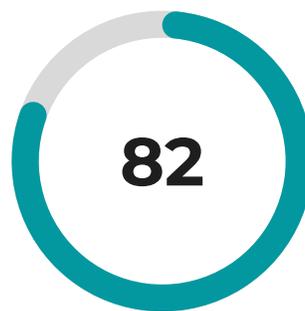


Apportionment Overview

Despite a challenging local church environment in 2025, the Annual Conference is grateful for the support shown by our local churches to our connection. The conference collected 80.3% of all apportionments, down slightly from the 82% we collected in 2024. This result fell in the range of expectations, and I thank our churches for their continued support.



**2025 Final
collection
percentage**



**2024 collection
percentage**

Treasurer



Funds Held for Future Benefits:

As we close out 2025, I would like to highlight our funds held for future clergy benefits. The purpose of this fund is to protect our active local churches from increased liabilities for retiree clergy health and defined benefit plans because of churches that have either disaffiliated or closed. Each year the Council on Finance and Administration (CFA) sets aside up to 4% of the fund to reduce clergy benefit apportionments. In 2025 that amount was \$340,000. For this year (2026) the amount will be \$410,000, an increase of \$70,000, and I expect that rate of growth in the future. This reflects the strong commitment from CFA to ease the apportionment burden on our churches and to protect them from future liabilities. The sources for the funds held for future benefits have come primarily from disaffiliated churches and now comes from the proceeds of sold closed churches. The amount received from each church is a pro rata share of the estimate of the total clergy benefit liabilities set during the disaffiliation period.

Conference Held Closed Church Properties:

The Conference Trustees during the year managed 84 properties from closed churches and sold 15 of those properties in 2025 for a total of \$2,759,266. During 2025 properties yielded \$1,070,000 in additional revenues, primarily from rents and other non-real estate assets, bringing the total revenues to \$3,829,000. Holding expenses for these properties was \$1,938,000 bringing a net inflow from closed church properties for 2025 to \$1,891,000. The Trustee's released \$750,000 for grants and established the apportionment relief endowment. The Trustee's have retained \$1,100,000 as of the end of 2025, which is about 6 months of holding expenses and monitor the expenses and necessary reserve for repairs and maintenance monthly.

Other Offices

TRUSTEES

The Board of Trustees continues to meet monthly to research and discover the best and highest use for the closed church properties that have been entrusted to us. We believe that all real estate is an asset which can and should be used for the benefit of the Virginia Annual Conference.

To that end, we are in negotiations with several developers to transform some of our more urban and suburban properties into projects that will greatly benefit the communities in which they are located.

Examples of this redevelopment include affordable housing, senior housing, and preschool/day care facilities. Once these negotiations are complete, we will announce the specifics, but, as you can imagine, these talks do take time.

We have partnered with the Coastal Virginia District and Wesley Community Development to enter discussions regarding Epworth UMC in downtown Norfolk which has closed. There are many exciting possibilities for this property that will not only support the local community but provide some much-needed services.

Unfortunately, we continue to have local churches who wish to leave the connection but did not take advantage of the disaffiliation process when it was available to them. As a result, we have had some litigation, but I am happy to report that we have been successful in defending the Trust Clause in the Commonwealth of Virginia. This is one of the top priorities of the Board of Trustees. We want to thank Andrew White and his team at William Mullens for their continued assistance in legal matters which come before the Board of Trustees.

And finally, I am happy to report that due to the real estate activities of the Board of Trustees we have been able to transfer \$750,000.00 to benefit the Annual Conference. Of this amount \$600,000.00 has been transferred to Council of Finance and Administration(CFA) for investment, the proceeds of which will be used to help reduce apportionments to our local churches. The remaining \$150,000.00 has been made available for grants to local churches for mission and ministry initiatives.

We want to thank David Dommissie and his staff in the Treasurer's Office for their invaluable assistance in helping us make important financial decisions.

Kathy Lutman, President
Kathy.lutman@gmail.com 540-454-2836

Other Offices

VUMPI

- VUMPI has launched several new wellness initiatives that are intended to enhance the benefits provided through the Conference-sponsored clergy health plans and to target areas of demonstrated need and higher costs.

Specific programs launched in January include the following:

- The Thrive Healthy Back and Joints program, through which health plan members can receive virtual physical therapy care
 - The Virta program that provides treatment for diabetes, prediabetes and weight management
 - The Bloom program, in partnership with Sword Health, which offers women's pelvic health treatment
- The new Compass denominational clergy retirement savings program was launched in January, replacing the Clergy Retirement Savings Plan, which had been in place since 2007. The Compass program includes automatic features such as automatic enrollment and automatic contribution escalation.
 - A new wellness incentive program administered by Anthem has been launched in 2026, replacing the prior program that was in place through the end of 2025. Under the new program, health plan members and their enrolled spouses can receive up to \$200 in rewards each year by completing activities such as a health assessment, having an annual preventive wellness exam, and getting an annual flu shot.



Other Offices

FOUNDATION

Waiting on maintenance or repairs? Leaky roof, failing HVAC, deferred upkeep? These small, essential projects can block your ministry, and the Foundation's Development Company (DevCo) is here to fix that.

DevCo makes loans fast, flexible, and mission-focused for the unglamorous but critical work that keeps your church safe, welcoming, and functional. If your facility needs attention, don't wait. A DevCo loan can help you solve the problem, protect your space, and free your energy for ministry impact.

Construction Loans: Build What's Next

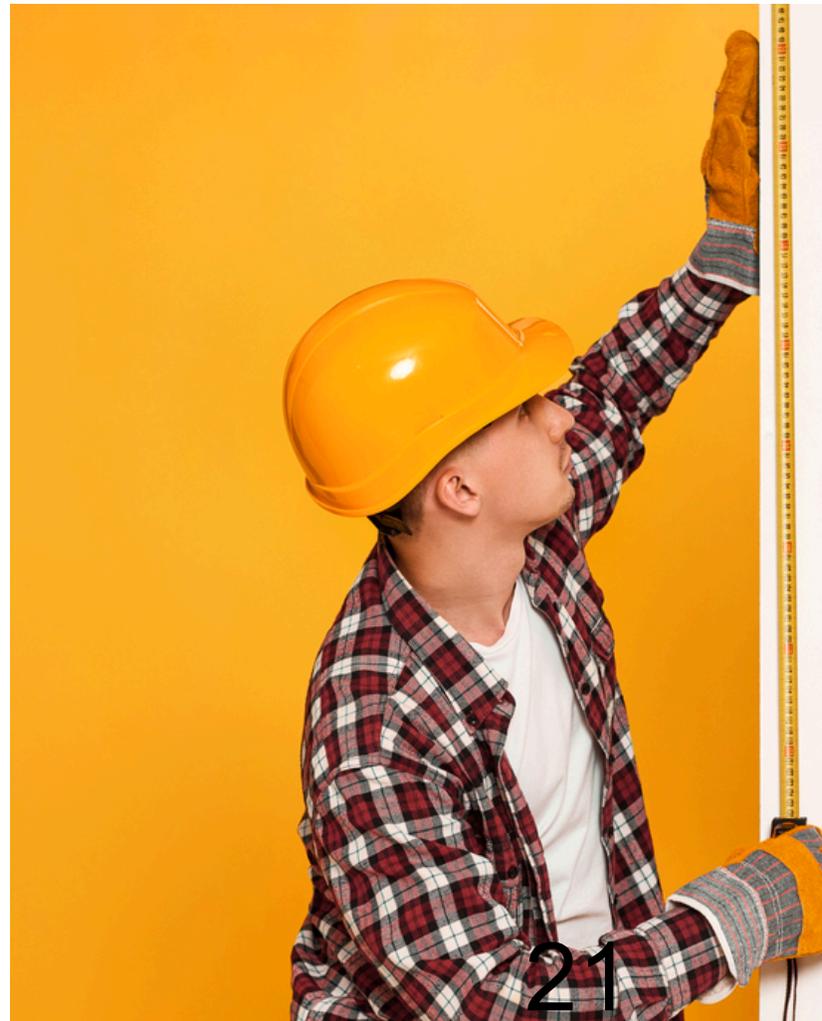
Growing churches need growing spaces. DevCo funds construction and renovation to ensure your building aligns with your mission. And the loan process is fast and straightforward.

Refinance with DevCo: Free Up Cash. Fund More Ministry.

Too many churches are stuck with high-interest loans. DevCo fixes that by helping churches refinance at better rates, unlocking cash for ministry, not debt.

DevCo has helped dozens of churches boost cash flow, fund programs and avoid painful budget cuts, creating less stress and greater impact.

Want your money working for mission, not the bank? Ready to break ground? [Reach out to DevCo.](#)



Coastal Virginia District

HIGHLIGHTS:

- The District was excited to host the North Carolina Rural Center on **October 18, 2025** as they guided in using Asset-Based Community Development practices to better engage with and love our neighbors. Activities included a social capital game with Jenga, and opened our eyes to how decisions we make either help build up our community trust or take it away. We were able to share the “We Can” game to all churches during our regional Charge Conferences, as well as other resources to help empower our clergy and laity. “We Can” is a great resource to help churches of all sizes see what they are capable of doing for their community through their relationships and social capital.
- We held 7 different regional charge conferences, which included a time of sharing communion and resources, as well as gathering as our regional clusters to better serve our communities together.
 - In December, we were excited to host Lan Davis Wilson, Director of Belonging and Advocacy, throughout our district at seven different gatherings. These gatherings were part of and kicked off Lan's listening and sharing "Coffee Tour" across the conference. Some fruit from this gathering is a shared sermon series resource that clergy may use this Spring around God's justice.
 - We also redesigned our newsletter this quarter as we move toward strengthening our communications and connection. We have an events district calendar now to feature local church events.



Living Waters District

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Over 200 people gathered at Crenshaw UMC in Blackstone on **January 18, 2026** for our annual district training event called EMPOWER.
- Pulpit Swap Initiative Seven Dinwiddie Stream churches—Lebanon, Carson, Concord, Rocky Run, Kenwood, Mt. Olivet, and Mansons UMC—exchanged pastors throughout Lent, fostering creativity and stronger community connections across congregations.
- Campus Ministry Expansion Thomas Wynn now serves as Interim Director of Campus Ministries at Virginia State University.
- We launched the District Minority and Cross-Cultural appointment gathering, providing vital support and encouragement to pastors.
- Our Mission & Outreach Committee distributed over \$37,000 in ministry grants throughout the district.
- Rev. Thomas Wynn, our Youth Coordinator, appointed seven regional coordinators to strengthen youth ministry across the district. Our summer UM Day at Kings Dominion drew excellent participation.
- We held seven Charge Conferences featuring Tim Beck's "Be the Bean" message. Attendees signed a banner displaying the new UM Vision Statement, which was presented to Bishop Sue for Christmas.
- We introduced FinalSite, our integrated communication platform, enabling simultaneous email, text, and voicemail messaging to all district pastors and lay leaders.



Mission Rivers District

HAPPENINGS IN THE DISTRICT

- Fall was a full season as Lindsey got to know the clergy and laity of Mission Rivers.
- We held cluster Charge Conferences hosted by various churches, where everyone answered the question: where are you seeing hope in your community?
- Across the district, we are seeing signs of hope through feeding ministries, local thrift stores and collaboration across communities.
- We welcomed Kim Johnson, conference Director of Resourcing, as a member of our team this fall. Kim conducted a thorough communications audit and staff have already begun improving the ways we communicate, share our story across the district.
- We hosted two clergy gatherings: an outing to a local park in the lower part of the district and ornament making in the upper part of the district.
- We will host our District Training on February 7th at Ebenezer UMC (Stafford) and a training day on Hospitality on March 21st at New Song UMC (Mechanicsville).



Mountain View District

HIGHLIGHTS:

As a result of the ongoing federal government shutdown in October, several of our local church food ministries and partner food pantries reported a sharp increase in families seeking help, as people anticipated the loss or delay of SNAP benefits and possible interruptions to USDA food assistance.

In response, the Mountain View District allocated \$20,000 from district reserves for one-time emergency grants to support up to 20 local church feeding programs and food pantries already providing vital community support. In the span of three weeks, twenty micro-grants of \$500, \$1000, or \$1,500 were awarded to churches with ministries from neighborhood blessing boxes to hot lunches for folks who come to the church for a shower, from rural churches with once a month food and diaper distribution to a town church with an extensive community Thanksgiving box distribution.

More than 500 UM volunteers impacted the lives of nearly 10,000 people in the Mountain View District as a result of these grants. DS Sarah reminded us that, “when we feed the hungry, we serve Christ himself. This was not a political response — it was a faithful one. Together, we demonstrated the strength of our connection and our shared commitment to compassion and justice.”



CAPTION: EMMANUEL UMC, AMHERST, THANKSGIVING BOXES DISTRIBUTED TO THE COMMUNITY.

Northern Virginia

Northern Virginia experienced a year of grace and growth—celebrating new projects and expansion, and creating programs to support our churches, clergy, and congregations.

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Training Day:** A powerful gathering of more than 200 participants, speakers, workshop presenters, and more than 30 virtual groups for Training Day on January 17, 2026, at Floris UMC. The day opened with an engaging talk by Dr. Ashley Boggan, General Secretary of the General Commission on Archives and History. She shared thoughts on our United Methodist heritage and “Wesleyan Vitality,” the rebellious, love-driven spirit that gave birth to Methodism. Her keynote address challenged participants to rediscover our rooted holiness by risking comfort and reputation for justice, inclusion, and embodied grace.
- **New Lay Leadership Advisory Team:** We are launching a new District advisory team that will serve as a guiding body dedicated to developing and equipping laypersons across our churches for faithful leadership. The Team will serve as the hub for laity development across Northern Virginia, helping to strengthen, train, and encourage our lay leaders for ministry and discipleship. In collaboration with the Strategy and Administrative Teams, the Lay Leadership Advisory Team will develop a sustainable year-round rhythm of training, resourcing, mentoring, and networking to energize our ministries and build up the Body of Christ.
- **Bright spots in 2025** include the chartering of Restoration Church in Reston, VA in June, and a collaboration between Community of Faith and an affordable housing developer, Pennrose, to bring approximately 90 affordable housing units to the church's 9-acre property. Work also continues at 11 churches across the District that received a collective \$2 million in grants to fund a range of projects. Through this project, the District is helping congregations live into their missional calling by reducing financial burdens and investing in their physical infrastructure.



Shenandoah River District

The Shenandoah River District Office is on the move—literally. With the closing of our physical office space in Toms Brook, the district staff team is beginning 2026 “on the go,” traveling across the district to be more present and accessible.

Rather than asking people to come, we go and meet clergy and congregations where ministry is already happening—regularly and intentionally. This shift reflects the three words guiding our district’s focus and support: Connect, Listen, and Focus. We want to strengthen relationships across the district, hear what leaders are experiencing on the ground, and stay centered on our shared mission.

Coffee on Us

Another practical way we are building connection is through Coffee on Us, launched in the last quarter of 2025. Clergy and lay leaders are invited to meet up with colleagues at a local coffee shop (or tea spot), share conversation about mission and discipleship, snap a selfie, and send it to the district office with a receipt. The district will cover the cost—because meaningful connection often begins with simple, consistent time together.

We pray that 2026 will be a continued blessing for every church and ministry across the district and beyond. And as the 2026 Virginia Annual Conference comes to our district, we are excited to welcome the wider connection into our home.



Three Notch'd District

NEW INITIATIVE

One of the Three Notch'd District 2025 initiatives has been helping local churches with learning more about sharing their faith stories.

For over 30 years, the Rev. Chip Giessler, Aldersgate UMC, Charlottesville, has been helping folks learn this important skill. Faith Sharing 101 is a video featuring Rev. Giessler and four church members.

District churches have access to the video along with a discussion guide and a Spiritual Autobiography Graph. In addition, churches who request the video receive stretchy bracelets with "God's story, my story" on them. To date, 20 churches have requested the Faith Sharing 101 material. The Rev. Marg Kutz, retired, recently shared the material at women's retreat. She said "The 25 retreat participants loved the bracelets."

We are excited to see how God will use this material as we prepare "to always be ready to give an answer to anyone about the hope that is in you." (1 Peter 3:15).



Valley Ridge District

While the last quarter of the year is always busy for our churches and pastors as they make ready for Thanksgiving, Advent, and Christmas, the Valley Ridge District churches ramped up the pace even more. With our two interim DS's, Jay Carey and Sarah Calvert, and our District Lay Leader Larry Dickenson, much more than the standard holiday fare was accomplished these last months of 2025.

Six cluster charge conferences were held across the Valley Ridge District, and we want to thank the following churches for hosting: St Paul Christiansburg, St Marks Daleville, Parrish Court Covington, Trinity Lexington, Calvary Stuarts Draft, and Christ Staunton.

The first of our year long training series on Susanna, John, and Charles Wesley kicked off in October with a lecture by Dr. Doug Powe, President of Phillips Theological Seminary in Oklahoma. He lectured on the impact of Susanna Wesley on her children, especially John and Charles, that although not clergy, she defined the unique role all have in the mission of the church.

A Lay Servant Training was held in late October at Granbery Memorial in Covington, where 25 Lay Servants were trained in Basic, Preaching, and Spiritual Gifts class. Thanks Granbery Memorial for hosting, and for Larry Dickenson, Brian Boettcher and Dale White for teaching!

The District Lay Leader Larry Dickenson hosted numerous listening sessions in December, discerning the thoughts and concerns of our district laity.

Finally, in response to food insecurity challenges, churches across the district responded in a variety of ways to collect food through special programs and food pantries, joining connectionally with the VAUMC to support this critical need.





Upcoming VAUMC Dates

NEXT Q SOURCE (Q1 2026)

Released late April 2026

ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2026

June 17- 20, 2026