



THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

VIRGINIA CONFERENCE

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An Update on Financial and Staffing Matters

Dear Virginia Annual Conference:

Following up on my May 12 letter, here are key updates pertaining to the Virginia Conference's finances and staffing.

While we continue to face strong financial challenges, I am cautiously optimistic that the toughest economic effects of the pandemic are slowly subsiding. The cost controls we have implemented have been working well, though we still need to be vigilant and to continuously find ways to work to optimal efficiency.

I am also optimistic that apportionment payments will soon increase now that the Commonwealth is re-opening, albeit gradually and carefully, with a proper emphasis on public safety. A number of churches in the Conference are returning to in-person worship this Sunday and I am expecting other churches to do so in the coming weeks.

Through May 31, we have collected 26.5 percent of the 2020 apportionments. Last year we had collected 31.3 percent of apportionments at this same time. As a reminder, the Council on Finance and Administration reduced 2020 apportionments by 27.2 percent in March 2020.

Cost saving measures at the Conference have resulted in lower expenditures which is partially offsetting the decrease in apportionment receipts. I thank the many churches that have made substantial apportionment payments in 2020, and prayerfully ask that other churches do so as well.

I am also encouraged because the Conference's unrestricted reserves are above the minimum target set at last year's annual conference. Should there be a hard hitting second wave of COVID-19, these resources will be quite important for the Conference and all the churches we serve.

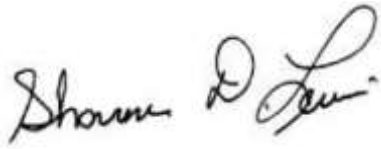
Considering the evolving financial situation and to best serve our members, we have returned three professionals at the Conference to full-time status from part-time status. Two are in the communications area and one is in information technology. These professions are especially important given the challenges at hand.

Finally, I want to commend the Treasurer's Office at the Conference and the United Methodist Credit Union for helping dozens of churches and affiliated organizations to obtain \$2.8 million of forgivable loans under the federal government's Paycheck Protection Program. Funds are still available as the credit union made clear in an [announcement on June 17](#). The Treasurer's Office and the Credit Union are available to work with churches on applications.

We are fully committed and focused on our mission of making Disciples for Jesus Christ. While the pandemic has forced us to make many changes, we have been and will adapt to perform that mission.

Thank you for your attention to these matters.

Peace and Blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sharma D. Lewis". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial 'S'.

Bishop Sharma D. Lewis