

**CHARTER FOR THE
COMMON TABLE FOR CHURCH VITALITY**

Effective January 1, 2006

As Amended July 1, 2015

I. PURPOSE

The Common Table for Church Vitality (“Common Table”) serves to coordinate and prioritize the ministries and resources of the Virginia Conference. It nurtures, interprets and promotes the vision of the Conference, as well as the mandates of *The Book of Discipline* which relate to Conference work. The Common Table lives out the values of the Conference (stated below in **I.B.**) in its own work, and advocates for the presence and observance of those values in the work and ministry of the Conference.

A. MISSION

The mission of the Virginia Annual Conference is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world by equipping its local churches for ministry and by providing a connection for ministry beyond the local church; all to the glory of God.

B. VALUES

The Conference shall embody the following values as it endeavors to assist all churches in the task of *making disciples*:

- Be led by the Holy Spirit.
- Grow spiritually and numerically.
- Serve the local church.
- Connect with and equip the local church for ministries of welcome, nurture and transformation.
- Develop and live out ministries to the poor.
- Strive for excellence.
- Model servant-leadership at all levels.
- Honor diversity and teach inclusivity.
- Practice simplicity.
- Communicate effectively, that others might also.
- Focus on ministry.

II. MEMBERSHIP

The Common Table provides spiritual leadership for the Conference to carry out the Purpose of this Charter. The Common Table includes the following 13 voting positions and 2 non-voting positions:

A. Voting Members

1. Presiding Bishop
2. Conference Lay Leader
3. Director of Connectional Ministries
4. Cabinet representative assigned by the bishop
5. Commission on Ethnic Minority Concerns and Advocacy representative (in accordance with ¶643.5)
6. Chair of Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministries (in accordance with ¶634.3)
7. Eight at-large members equally divided between clergy and laity in annual classes, including two young adult/youth representatives, as elected in III

B. Non-voting Members

1. Representative from Council on Finance and Administration assigned by the Council on Finance and Administration

The elected Secretary of the Annual Conference shall serve as Secretary for the Common Table without vote.

It is both desirable and consistent with our Conference values that the members of the Common Table represent the diversity of our Conference.

III. SELECTION OF AT-LARGE COMMON TABLE MEMBERS

1. Four of the Common Table at-large members (2 clergy and 2 laity) are nominated by the Conference Leadership Discovery and Development Team and elected by the annual conference. Two of these t at-large members must be young adult/youth representatives.

2. Four of the Common Table at-large members (2 clergy and 2 laity) are nominated by the Bishop and elected by the annual conference.

IV. TERMS OF SERVICE FOR AT-LARGE MEMBERS

At-large members serve four year terms and are placed in annual classes. If a person is elected to fill an unexpired term of two years or less, that person is eligible for reelection to a full four year term. In the event that a member resigns or dies during his/her term, a replacement shall be nominated by the Conference Leadership Discovery and Development Team or the Bishop, according to method of nomination, and elected by the Annual Conference with the replacement serving until the end of the original term. Any at-large member of the Common Table who is absent from two meetings without excuse or from three consecutive meetings for any reason shall automatically cease to be a member of the Common Table.

V. MEETINGS

The Common Table will meet at least quarterly, often in extended day format, to enhance the depth of its work and its own spiritual formation as a faith community. By invitation of the Common Table, others may meet with the Common Table to enhance its knowledge and understanding. Meetings shall be open, consistent with the provisions of *The Book of Discipline*.

VI. OFFICERS

The Bishop, Conference Lay Leader and Director of Connectional Ministries will lead the Common Table in interpreting the Conference vision. The Director of Connectional Ministries is the Chairperson. The Conference Lay Leader is the Vice Chairperson. The Secretary of the Annual Conference is the Secretary of the Common Table, without vote.

VII. COMMITTEES

A. PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

The Common Table shall appoint a Personnel Committee annually from within its members to assist with the selection and employment of all Conference program staff, both lay and clergy. The Common Table shall appoint the chair of the Personnel Committee. The Director of Connectional Ministries shall serve as an ex officio member of this committee without vote.

B. GRANTS COMMITTEE

The Common Table may appoint a Grants Committee annually from among the members of the Conference to advise the Common Table on the following:

1. Grants for connectional ministries beyond the local level, funded through the Conference Benevolence apportionment, and
2. Program grants for local ministry projects funded through the Conference Benevolence apportionment, the United Methodist Women, and the Church Extension Fund.

C. OTHER COMMITTEES

The Common Table may designate such other committees as are necessary for its functioning.

VIII. SELECTION OF DIRECTOR OF CONNECTIONAL MINISTRIES AND STAFF

- A.** The Annual Conference shall elect annually upon nomination of the Bishop, and in consultation with the Common Table's Personnel Committee and the Cabinet, an executive officer to be known as the Director of Connectional Ministries. The responsibilities of the Director of Connectional Ministries shall be but are not limited to the following:
1. To serve as the Chairperson of the Common Table and Co-chairperson, with the Conference Lay Leader, of the Conference Leadership Development and Discovery Team.
 2. To be a communication link between the Conference program agencies and Jurisdictional and General Conference program agencies.
 3. To facilitate communication among the Conference program agencies and the local churches.
 4. To serve as a resource person for district programs and the Common Table in the program planning, implementation and evaluation process.
 5. To supervise the Conference program staff persons.
 6. To serve on other Conference agencies as determined by the Annual Conference, and/or by the Common Table.
- B.** Each clergy staff person shall be nominated annually by the Personnel Committee of the Common Table with the request that the Bishop would appoint him or her. Each lay staff person shall be nominated annually by the Personnel Committee of Common Table and employed by the Common Table. Nominations for staff members shall be presented to the Common Table after consultation with the appropriate boards and agencies.
- C.** The Director of United Methodist Communications shall carry out the policies and program of Virginia United Methodist Communications, Inc. and shall cooperate with all agencies of the Conference in the use of the media to disseminate news that promotes the diverse work of the Church's life.
- D.** The Business Manager/Treasurer of the Annual Conference shall serve the Common Table and all of the boards and agencies in direct support of their work and shall oversee the financial operations of the Common Table. In that capacity, the Business Manager/Treasurer shall coordinate this work with the Director of Connectional Ministries.
- E.** All Conference program staff shall be employed by and amenable to the Common Table. The Director of Connectional Ministries shall be responsible for the administration and direction of the program staff.
- F.** Administrative/Technical/Professional Staff of the Common Table shall be employed by the Director of Connectional Ministries in consultation with the appropriate elected staff member as may be requested and as provision for same is made by the Common Table.

IX. FINANCES

The Common Table shall present a budget to the Council on Finance and Administration to cover the expenses for the work of the Common Table and the boards and agencies, committees, commissions, task forces and other groups for which it is responsible. The right of the Annual Conference boards and agencies to be heard by the Council on Finance and Administration shall not be denied, as provided by ¶614 the 2012 *Book of Discipline*.

X. MEETINGS OF BOARD AND COMMISSION CHAIRS

Semi-annual (or as often as necessary) meetings of Chairs (or designated representatives) of Conference Program Boards and Commissions that are under the oversight of Common Table will be held for the purpose of aligning conference program and mission

with the vision of the Conference. A report of the Chairs' meetings will be provided to Common Table to assist in its responsibilities for its purpose of coordinating and prioritizing the ministries and resources of the Virginia Conference. The boards and commissions that are amenable to Common Table are:

- Board of Church and Society
- Board of Communications
- Board of Discipleship
- Board of Global Ministries
- Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministries
- Board of Laity
- Church Development Team
- Commission on Disabilities
- Commission on Ethnic Minority Concerns and Advocacy
- Commission on Status and Role of Women

Other Attendees

- a. Conference Staff serving as primary staff resource to these boards and commissions will attend these meetings with voice but without vote.
- b. The Presidents (or designated representatives) of the Conference United Methodist Men and United Methodist Women will be encouraged to participate in these meetings.
- c. Chairs (or designated representatives) of Conference Administrative Boards that are not under the purview of Common Table will be encouraged to participate in these meetings.

The Director of Connectional Ministries shall chair these meetings.

XI. AMENDMENTS

Amendments to the charter not in conflict with *The Book of Discipline* may be made by a majority vote of the Annual Conference and originate as follows:

- (1) upon recommendation of the Common Table, or
- (2) upon petition of a member of the Annual Conference at least 60 days prior to the next annual conference session.

The Common Table shall review the petition(s) and submit its recommendations to the Annual Conference together with the proposed amendment.

XII. EFFECTIVE DATE OF CHARTER

The Charter for the Common Table for Church Vitality shall become effective January 1, 2006.