

What are apportionments?



Apportionments are the way that our connected church — the word united is in our very name — works together to accomplish what could never be done on our own.

When United Methodists give to the church, we have a structure and process that demands the kind of strict accountability one would expect of gifts meant for God’s work in the world. We have a careful process in which United Methodist general funds are apportioned to the conferences and churches.

After the general church budget is approved by General Conference, the responsibility for raising these funds is divided among annual conferences based on a specific formula. Each annual and central conference, using its own formula, divides these requests, along with conference and administrative fund requests, among its local churches.

Learn more about connectional giving and specific apportionments with The United Methodist Church (UMC) Handbook at:

http://s3.amazonaws.com/Website_UMCGiving/resource-files/UMCHandbook-WEB-FINAL.pdf.

Created by the Virginia Conference Episcopal Office in consultation with the Treasurer’s Office, Virginia United Methodist Pensions, Inc.(VUMPI) and Connectional Ministries.

The Gospel of apportionments

One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, 'Which commandment is the first of all?' Jesus answered, 'The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these.

Mark 12:28-31

When questioned about which commandment is the first of all, Jesus answered that love of God is the first responsibility of life. Without being asked another question, Jesus shared a second commandment about the responsibility of life: love of neighbor as yourself. In Jesus' two commandments to love, the wholeness of the Gospel is found.

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, defined the value of Christian living through the wholeness of love for God and neighbor. The Virginia Conference is composed of over 1,100 congregations seeking to witness to the wholeness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Guided by love of God and neighbor they seek to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Evidence of their ministry is witnessed through a connection that is multiplied beyond what one congregation can accomplish by itself.

Examples of this connection, seen in ministries within and beyond the Virginia Conference, include:

Disaster Recovery



Disaster recovery through the Virginia Conference is coordinated by the Center for Justice and Missional Excellence. This mission response provides training for team leaders and coordinates short and long-term relief efforts with, on an annual average, over 800 volunteers working over 18,000 hours, a value of over \$400,000 in volunteer service.

At the 2018 Annual Conference, Susan Healey shared how the ministry of The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) and the connection of persons from Virginia and beyond helped her recover from the loss of her home to Hurricane Matthew and a subsequent lightning strike that destroyed another home in which she was living. She defined this recovery assistance, made possible through the connection of The United Methodist Church and the ministry of the Virginia Conference, as “the extreme gift of love our church can bestow.” You may access her powerful witness of faith at: <https://vimeo.com/333992355>.

Transforming Lives



The Commonwealth of Virginia is unique in that its prison chaplains are not state employees. In 1920 seven Protestant Christian denominations united their resources to form a statewide prison ministry that is currently named GraceInside (Virginia's Prison Chaplain Service). GraceInside ministers to a population of 30,000 offenders with over 30 chaplains serving in 35 state prisons. This ministry ensures those in prison have the opportunity to attend worship, participate in spiritually-based classes (Bible studies, grief groups, baptism classes, etc.) and spend one-on-one time with a chaplain. In the words of one ex-offender: "I survived because of you. You brought me to Jesus. You brought me a new and REAL life."

As the largest supporting denomination of GraceInside, the Virginia Conference gives \$167,000 annually to this transforming ministry of God's love.

Starting New Faith Communities



Figure 1: Skate Church, Fresh Expression in Hampton, Va.

Since 2008, 47 new faith communities have begun in the Virginia Conference through an emphasis on identifying and training church planters and launch teams. These new faith communities, made possible through the generosity of faithful Christian disciples throughout the conference, have impacted lives of new disciples throughout the state of Virginia. Overseen by the Center for Congregational Excellence, the result of this emphasis is that 37 of these new faith communities are currently active with an average of over 3,500 persons in worship every week.

A current strategy in beginning new faith communities is entitled Fresh Expressions. Across the conference, congregations of all sizes in all 16 districts are being invited to renewal as they share the good news of Jesus Christ in fresh ways with people in their communities. For more information about how your congregation can be part of the movement of Fresh Expressions in the Virginia Conference, contact MaryKaye Cochran at MaryKayeCochran@vaumc.org or 804-521-1155.

Campus Ministries



The Virginia Conference supports 12 related campus ministries. Overseen by The Center for Next Generation Ministries, these ministries are missional extensions of the church on college campuses. Each year, names and contact information are collected of youth from around the conference who are headed to college. Campus ministers receive that information and are able to follow up with those students, providing community, pastoral care, discipleship and leadership development opportunities during the crucial years when emerging adults are away, often for the first time, from their home communities. They are both nurtured and challenged to grow spiritually and missionally.

These campus ministries are in a unique position to form Christian leaders who will go on to become lay and clergy leaders in local churches and civic and business leaders in society at large.

For more information on campus ministries, or to make sure your students get connected in college, contact Paulo Lopes at PauloLopes@vaumc.org.

Initiatives of Hope



Figure 2: Creator's Co-op in Mozambique

Initiatives of Hope are the Virginia Conference's long-term global mission partnerships coordinated through the Center for Justice and Missional Excellence. The current Initiatives of Hope are with the Mozambique Annual Conference in Africa, the Methodist Church in Brazil in South America, and the new provisional conference of the Methodist Church of Cambodia in Southeast Asia. Chantra Sok, a Wesley Scholar in the Methodist Church of Cambodia and currently director of Community Engagement at International Justice Mission (Cambodia), witnesses to the impact of this ministry of the Virginia Conference.

“Looking back all the years I have gone through, there has been so much grace and blessings I could not really count. God has brought me from a young man without a vision or anything at all to be one of His sons joining His mission to serve people in my country. This law degree is absolutely valuable to my current job at International Justice Mission. I'm leading a team of passionate people to engage community partners in the fight against labor trafficking. I'm working with local churches and helping them understand God's heart for justice so that they can embrace God's call to protect the poor and the oppressed from violence.

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I'm so grateful for this and I'd like to express my deepest thanks to you in Virginia and other donors who tirelessly sponsored me and other students in Cambodia through the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM). Your support really changes lives! And it's transforming this nation! I have no doubt to say and I strongly believe that your scholarship program has impacted the development of human resources in Cambodia."

For more information about how your congregation or you may be involved in Initiatives of Hope, contact the Rev. Glenn Rowley at GlennRowley@vaumc.org.

Ministerial Education Fund (MEF)



One of the greatest impacts for ministry through apportionment giving is the Ministerial Education Fund (MEF) through the General Church. The purpose of this fund "is to enable to the church to unify and expand its program of financial support for the recruitment and education" of clergy, candidates for ministry through theological education, and continuing education.

Here are a few examples of how MEF supports a person from their initial call all the way to retirement:

- Calling 21 for those discerning a call
- Seminary visits to connect with students

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- Grants and loans for those attending seminary and Course of Study
- Supporting Candidacy Mentors and District Committees
- Licensing School for incoming clergy
- Retreats fostering connection and training for Provisional members
- Financial support for continuing education and clergy development
- Supporting the orders of Deacon, Elder, the Fellowship of Local Pastors and Associate Members
- Supporting clergy families and encouraging clergy effectiveness
- Ethics trainings

These are only a few examples of how your giving impacts the mission and ministry of the Center for Clergy Excellence. It is the office's mission to identify, encourage, equip and support those who are set apart for the ministry of clergy. For more information, contact clergyexcellence@vaumc.org.

Serving those who serve our congregations



United Methodist clergy devote their lives in answering God's call to serve. Engaging in ministry with congregations in sacred moments of life, they, with their families, have served where appointed. In turn, United Methodist congregations of the Virginia Conference have covenanted to support these servants through health care and retirement plans as coordinated and implemented through the ministry of Virginia United Methodist Pensions, Inc. (VUMPI).

Established on June 22, 1965, VUMPI provides a covenant of support for both active clergy and families as well as retired clergy, their widows and widowers in the years following active appointment to ministry in the Virginia Conference. A bridge to those who have, are, and will serve through the licensed and ordained ministry of The United Methodist Church, VUMPI provides the avenue through which promised commitments become reality in serving those who serve the conference's local congregations.

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Facts:

- The Virginia Conference currently has an unfunded liability associated with the denomination's Pre-1982 pension plan. Each year, VUMPI makes a payment toward that liability, and that payment is funded through apportionments.
- The conference's current unfunded liability is approximately \$5.6 million, and the annual funding obligation for the Pre-1982 pension is approximately \$1.5 to \$2 million.
- The denominational pension program under which clergy are currently earning pension benefits is the Clergy Retirement Security Program. Each year, VUMPI funds the present value of all future pension benefits earned in that year. Funding for this annual pension payment is received through direct billing to Virginia Conference churches, and the annual funding requirement is approximately \$5.8 million.
- The conference-sponsored health insurance programs, for active and retired clergy, are funded primarily through apportionments.
- The health insurance programs are one way that the Virginia Conference honors their clergy, and the programs reflect a commitment to provide valuable and necessary benefits to those who do so much to care for members of the Virginia Conference.
- The costs associated with the health programs for active and retired clergy are not negotiable; failure to pay for those programs means that the clergy will no longer have those essential benefits.
- A church's election not to pay its clergy benefits apportionments would essentially be a transfer of costs to others.

- Withholding clergy benefit apportionment payments would also represent a failure to pay for programs that benefit all of the clergy, including those who previously served and are currently serving that church.

For more information from Wespath, visit:

<https://www.wespath.org/WayForwardWespathFAQ/>.

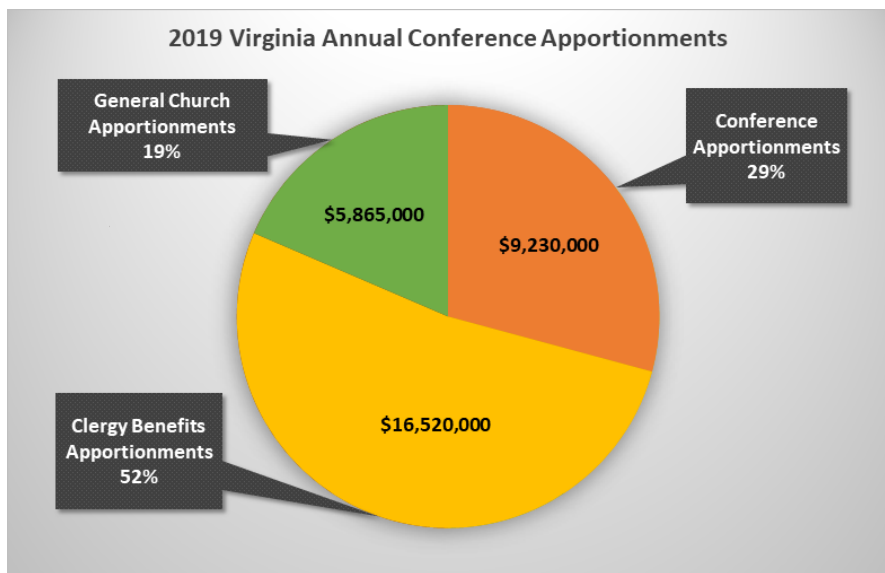
Questions about giving:

Gifts that empower the ministry of The United Methodist Church are expressions of both personal faith and connected faith. In the Virginia Conference, the conference budget is allocated into three areas of financial support:

- Conference apportionments
- Clergy benefit apportionments and
- General and Southeastern Jurisdictional apportionments.

Conference apportionments and Clergy Benefit apportionments are approved each year at annual conference. General and Southeastern Jurisdiction apportionments are approved every four years.

2019 Virginia Annual Conference Apportionments



Apportionments support the work of a diverse denomination that is sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ on a global level. The Virginia Conference website (www.vaumc.org) and The United Methodist Church website (www.umc.org) contain information about the array of ministries that are made possible through connected giving.

Congregations or persons who have questions or concerns about how their gifts are being used may contact David Dommissie, Virginia Conference treasurer, at DavidDommissie@vaumc.org.